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A MESSAGE  
FROM THE PAST

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CHARLES H. EATON

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*Charles H. Eaton.*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PAST

SERMONS

BY  
*Henry*  
CHARLES H. EATON, D.D.  
LATE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE DIVINE PATERNITY  
NEW YORK



EDITED BY  
EMILY STUART EATON

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd.  
*In Memoriam.*

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
NEW YORK AND LONDON  
The Knickerbocker Press  
1903

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**BY**  
**EMILY STUART EATON**

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**Published, November, 1903**

**The Knickerbocker Press, New York**

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TO  
THE CHILDREN OF THE AUTHOR  
AS WELL AS THE TWO PARISHES WHICH IT WAS HIS PRIVILEGE  
TO SERVE :  
FOR THREE YEARS  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, PALMER, MASS.  
AND LATER FOR TWENTY-ONE YEARS  
THE CHURCH OF THE DIVINE PATERNITY  
NEW YORK CITY  
THESE SERMONS  
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

FOR several years before the death of the author, it was his intention to publish a volume of sermons; but ill-health overtook him and prevented the consummation of his plans.

So many of Dr. Eaton's friends of various denominations have expressed a desire to read the thoughts which they were privileged to hear from his pulpit, that it has been deemed fitting to fulfil both Dr. Eaton's intention and the wishes of his friends by placing this volume before the public.

As Dr. Eaton always preached extemporaneously, and only incomplete stenographic reports of a few sermons remain, the work of selection has been somewhat difficult. But rather than to have the sermons remodelled by other hands, it has been thought best to present them as nearly as possible as they were left. This explanation is felt to be due to the author and reader alike.

E. S. E.

NEW YORK, October, 1903.



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## I

### ON THE HEIGHTS

You may find my text in the 18th verse of the 1st chapter of the 2d Epistle of St. Peter: "And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount."

ST. PETER is one of the most striking figures in the history of the early Church; and even although we deny him the position of primate in an infallible church, his personal characteristics and the importance of the events in his career will place him forever in the high regard of Christendom. St. Peter appears, as some one has said, "consistently inconsistent." He was a man of impetuous disposition, of passionate life. He undertakes to walk without judgment or preparation upon the water to his Lord, but soon sinks in despair and cries out for help. He declares that he will not forsake

## 2      A Message from the Past

the Lord though all the world forsake Him, and before the cock crows he denies Him thrice. He was declared to be, in some very real sense, the rock upon which the Christian church should stand, and yet he could not watch with the Lord for a single hour in the Garden of Gethsemane. He declared that he loved the ways of peace, and yet he struck in his masterful anger the ear of the servant of the high priest. He cursed and denied his Master before His enemies on the days of His betrayal and His crucifixion; yet he rushed to the sepulchre on the day of His resurrection, and he asked that he might be crucified with his head down, because he was not worthy to follow the example of his Lord and Master. St. Peter is not an isolated personality. His career is not an exceptional career. He is of special interest to us from the fact that he represents a certain tendency of life.

What is more certain than that there are in all of our lives most violent contrasts? On one day there is supreme exaltation; perhaps the very next day there is extreme depression. At one moment there seems to be

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no sacrifice that we would not be willing to make for honor and humanity and for God; and then the weariness creeps into our veins, affects the muscles and nerves of our bodies, goes in a little deeper and affects our grip upon events, undermines our courage, saps our enthusiasm; and what was yesterday so light that it seemed to us we could fly with it upon our shoulders is now a heavy weight that bends us to the earth and takes away from us all hope.

Last Sunday morning, in the midst of sunshine and flowers and multitudes of people, we celebrated the great event, the culminating fact of the Christian religion. We thought of immortality; we thought of the Master who had broken the bonds of the tomb, and, surrounded by all noble images, with great ideals, with the impetus which we had received during many days of meditation and worship, it seemed to us, perhaps, as though we were far above the turmoil of life, far above its extremes. All the world seemed to reflect the glory of the resurrection day, and the meanest of us seemed to have wings with which we

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could fly away and be at rest. All imaginative souls forgot the friction of life; forgot the long road along which they must pass day after day and year after year; forgot the agony of lingering sickness; forgot the slow and low tones that come from those who are fighting their awful battles with the tragedies of life. Aye, in the glorious light of the resurrection day the recent tragedies of our city, so terrible, going down so deep in our experience, were all for the moment forgotten, and God seemed everywhere, and good seemed everywhere, and Heaven spoke to this earth of ours, and at once its weariness was all gone. And yet, I imagine that during the days that have passed since that Easter celebration there may have been some in this congregation—there certainly have been many in our great city and throughout the world—who have felt the reaction. They have gone back into the shadow. The old questions they have asked again, and somehow they do not hear the angels of God replying as they did on Easter morning. The burden has settled down again; the shadows and the mists have gathered once more. Easter

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seems away back in the past, and the jubilant songs now seem a mockery to men. That is the way it was with St. Peter; and was not St. Peter then a type of our own experience? Shall we not gain something on this Sunday after Easter if we ask ourselves, How can we stay on the heights?—Not only how may we climb to those blessed summits on Easter morning; not only how may we at certain periods in our lives, or at certain moments in our lives, feel the surge of the waters that roll forever with blessing about the throne of God; not only how may we break aside those clouds and see the faces of our beloved and hear them talk to us, in some supreme moments when we are exalted above the things of earth; but how may we stay on the heights all the time, and even when we go down into the valleys to meet the friction of life and its mysteries and tragedies, how may we carry the light and spirit of the heights down there with us? That really is what we want to get at by this constant instruction from the pulpit, by this inspiration of the songs of the sanctuary, by this coming together that we may touch one another's

## 6      A Message from the Past

hands and look into one another's faces. We want to find out how we may keep our faces set towards the New Jerusalem all the time; how when we are down among the poisonous things of life we can trample these evil things under our feet and keep our shoulders square and our heads erect however hard the place, however galling the chains that are placed upon us.

I should be very sorry if only on Easter morning, surrounded by the multitudes who come out only on such occasions as this, and amid the fragrance and beauty of the flowers and the beautiful music, we could feel inspiration. Why, the greatest inspiration the world has ever had came in that little upper chamber in the olden times, where there were only Christ and his twelve Apostles, and one of them a traitor. The mightiest throbs of human sympathy that the world has ever known have started down in some dark cellar, where some liberator of his kind has been working like a slave, writing the emancipation of millions of humankind who have been denied the rights of manhood and womanhood. The greatest impetus the world has ever conceived, the noblest

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impulses that have ever come have not come from the crowd, but have come from men and women who toiled on, day after day, doing the old things in the old way, following the old routine until the old routine has become blessed, until they could not go on without it, living on the heights, not on Easter day, but on every day of the year. We are different, I know, in mental and moral constitution. Some of us are sunny by nature, and some of us have to fight for sun; some of us are moral or ethical, in a typical sense—all our words and all our deeds are regulated by a stiff rule, and we move with much the same accuracy and with much the same results as to certainty that a clock moves with. But others of us are emotional, passionate, like St. Peter. We go far up and we go far down. Our lives are not even. To-day we are on the heights; to-morrow we are down in the valleys, and the waters of death have gone over our heads. Well, whether we be the ethical or the emotional type, the intellectual or the passionate, we are all of us in danger of living only now and then up there in the light.



## 8      A Message from the Past

What we want to learn from the life of St. Peter, and the lives of all great teachers, and men who have accomplished something in the world, is how we may keep up there on the upper plane of life as much of the time as possible. First of all it is evident that St. Peter reached that splendid result the latter part of his life; for you must remember that the words of our text he used twenty-five years after the day of Transfiguration, of which he is speaking, when he was an old man, and, as I read in the Scriptures this morning, when he was about to die, because his message was sent just before his death, when he was a very old man, when he was weak in body and sight and no longer able to preach the word of God. He said that he remembered as though it were yesterday that voice that came from heaven on the mount a quarter of a century before, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It was in old age that St. Peter had learned to control himself, had learned to direct the forces of his nature so that he could recall, even upon the edge of the grave, that wonderful voice, so

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long ago, that had taught him that peace which is everlasting. But think of the time, the years, between that day of Transfiguration and the day of St. Peter's death! Remember that Easter day for him had come and gone, as it has come and gone for another year for you and for me. And his mind reached over all the intervening space, and he looked once more into the transfigured face of the Lord; he saw Moses and Elias on the one side and the other of the Master, and he remembered how James and John were with himself kneeling before the glory of the Master, and how the angels were on either side also; and the voice came down from heaven, saying the words which I have already quoted. And then St. Peter remembered how all that intervening space had been occupied. He had been going day after day and week after week to the church; he had been listening to the instruction of the church; he had been giving instruction to others; he had been joining in the celebration of the Lord's Supper; he had been baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; he had been doing all those simple services of the

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church with which you and I are so familiar. That was the way he had learned, little by little, to creep up to those heights and remain there always.

I am interested, and very glad, on Easter morning to observe most of the churches in our city crowded to the doors and hundreds turned away, as they were turned away from our church and other churches last Sunday. There is a certain kind of enthusiasm in it, and I am sure that all those who were with us last Sunday morning felt somehow that God was very near, and heaven was very near; and some of them who had been in the midst of very great trouble felt somehow that new inspiration had come to them. Indeed, I have received many letters,—I say it very humbly,—I have received during the last week, during days that have been somewhat weary to me, a great many letters, not only from our own people but from others as well, saying: “Immortality is very much more real to me.” But I have been thinking these days, also, of those hundreds and thousands of people who will never come into the church

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again until the next feast day, Christmas, perhaps, or next Easter, who do not pray day by day, or worship week after week in any church, who do not give any attention to the great services that were established by the Master; and I am not surprised to find them in the public conveyances, in the halls of pleasure, and on the avenues, and to see that the old shadow has fallen upon their faces, that they are despondent again, and that they are saying: "We do not understand the mystery of life, and we cannot understand the tragedy of life, and this life is all mean and full of trouble to us." Well, how can they expect anything else? If they want to stay on the heights, why do not they climb up to the heights more than once a year or twice a year? Why do not they go that way every day of their lives, in their homes, in their business offices, in the places where they meet others, in their chambers when they are alone? Why do not they go to some church—I care not what church—it need not be this church necessarily,—but why do not they go to some church that can help them, that can lift them up and keep them up there

## 12      A Message from the Past

on the heights? That is where we want to be.

There is a new organization in our midst. I do not agree with its philosophy. I believe, they are quite wrong as to their medical terms and their medical practices; but I believe in them. Why? Because they have been putting heart into men with it; they are bringing sunshine into the lives of the world. I do not care if they are not quite right in their philosophy—that they have sometimes let people die for want of medical treatment. I do not care so much about these things, if only they will keep on doing what they are doing—to a very considerable extent lifting men up to the heights and keeping them in the sunshine and the real joy of the universe. Have some church, or some other organization,—I care not what your creed or method of worship may be, —but every man and woman ought to adopt as his or hers some church, in order that by its routine of worship, by its constant reaching up after God, by the instruction and by the impulses that may be given by the minister and the congregation, they may learn, as did St. Peter, to hear that voice always—away back

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over the years, until old age shall make it a period so long we hesitate to count the years, making the voice of God a reality, making the communion with the saints a real thing. I do not think that by coming to the church all the mystery of life will be solved. I know well that no minister can bring solutions for some of the problems of life; I know that there are tragedies that are so awful that we cannot understand them; and we must wait, and as Tennyson said, "trust that somehow good will be the final goal of ill." But I do say that as the result of experience, as the result of dealing with such lives as the lives of which we are speaking, we may find ourselves more and more on the heights, and live up there, near to God and near to the sunshine, if we constantly give ourselves to the worship of the church, to the instruction and to the impulses of the church.

But St. Peter did not simply worship; he did not simply offer prayers, in private and in public. St. Peter won his victory over sin and over evil by work. And remember how he worked. He was poor, like his Master; he

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seldom had anywhere to lay his head, he worked from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to the western shores, and so, perhaps he worked in Rome, even perhaps in Spain. Wherever he was, he was teaching the old lessons that he had learned at the feet of the Master, he was giving the benediction of that day of Transfiguration, he was leading men up, though he went himself with bleeding feet and downcast head; he was leading men up to the heights, and teaching them how to stay on the heights. He was telling them about that voice he had heard so long ago, and he was trying to make that voice a real one to them, one that should sing its way through their dark days and into the shadowed and dusty chambers of their hearts. And it is the same with ourselves.

I do not think there is any more delightful bit of literature than *The Attic Philosopher*. There is very much of Christianity in it, as there is a deal of art. You remember the Attic Philosopher rises on Christmas morning—he lives all alone in the topmost room of one of the buildings of Paris,—and he looks out upon acres of roofs, and thinks that among all the millions in

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that great city there is not one who loves him, or whom he loves; and while he thinks that there is no joy for him on Christmas day, a child of poverty, whom he had befriended and forgotten on the street, climbs up the long, dusty staircase, and knocks at his door and brings him a solitary flower which she had raised in her room in that poverty-stricken part of Paris. And the Philosopher thinks then that perhaps there is after all some love and some sunlight in the world; and when he learns her story, he makes his resolution, and that night when she and her aged mother and her cripple brother are away, he goes over to their house—their single room—and puts in a stove, which he has mended in his poverty, and spreads out a humble feast for them upon the table, which is almost ready to fall at his lightest touch. And then he stands behind the door and waits for the aged mother and the children to come in, and as they come in they look with astonishment upon the stove that gives them fire where they have had no fire, and upon the simple repast which is spread out, and they say in awe-struck tones: "The angels of God



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must have been here." And then they have their feast together, for the Attic Philosopher makes himself known after a time. And when he goes back to his own little nest in that tenement house of Paris, and looks out upon the same roofs, he finds himself upon the heights. He has done a deed of love, little though it is, out of his poverty, to others that are more poverty-stricken than himself; and so he says: "Why, what a joyous world this is, and how much of God there is in it!" Yes, the Attic Philosopher is quite right. The surest way of getting up to the heights and staying there is to do some deed of love to another, is to make ourselves the messengers of God, is to lift some of the heavy burdens that rest upon men, and let the sunshine get within our hearts as we take hold with a firm grasp upon the cares of somebody else. Sometimes when we go from the chamber of bereavement, all the world is full of such terror that it seems to us we are ready to give up the struggle. We cannot bear it. The old voice was absolutely essential to us. The old hands—we must touch them. If we do not have them, we will cry out against

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God and we will think that this world is ruled by the devil himself. There are many such all around us. There are such to-day, my friends, who may be in this congregation. I have known of them during the week which has just passed, after Easter day. The world has many such cases. There is no golden sentence that we can read to them that will help them; there is no Bible that we can open to them that will lift them out of their despair; there is no word of the minister that shall start those cold fountains of hope and sunshine in their breasts. What can unloose the fountains of hope and sunshine? Only the work of love; only doing something for somebody else. Cannot you meet your sorrow; cannot you overcome your loss; cannot you find your way out of this awful desolation into which you have gone by the tragedy which has come into your life? Do not meet your enemy—for it is your enemy, it is making you narrow, it is making you weak, it is making you un-Christlike—do not meet your enemy face to face. You cannot do it; you are not strong enough. But meet your enemy by looking into the face of

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somebody's else enemy, somebody's else sorrow. Look into the sorrow of some other man or some other woman, your brother or your sister. Go out and do a deed of kindness and of love, and then you will find that little by little—not all at once, but little by little, you will strangle that awful feeling in your heart. You will bring up the sunshine; you will creep up—on your hands and knees, I know, but you will creep up onto the heights; and every time you creep up there you will stay there a little longer, and by and by you will stay there all the time, and you will know what it is to have a perpetual Easter morning in your hearts.

There is an old legend of the East which represents the poor people of a small village preparing for the coming of their king. They prepare their little huts as well as they can; they garnish everything; they put up flowers in the windows; they make everything sweet and clean; they get ready to sing their psalms in the morning for the coming of the king, and then they retire. And the old legend says that in the morning when they rose and went out into the streets, with the chants of praise

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upon their lips, seeing the king coming in the distance, they looked with astonishment and found that all their huts and all their plainest buildings had been transformed by an invisible power into wondrous castles and palaces and halls of marble, with roofs of gold and silver, more beautiful than they had ever seen before.

There is a great moral to us in that legend. You and I work down in the valley of life, on the simple and lowly planes of the world; we work with love in our hearts; we do the best we can to prepare for the coming of the King, and when we retire at night to rest, our work seems so imperfect, so unworthy. But the angels of God will come in the night while we sleep, and turn our works that seemed so imperfect, so unholy, into something better than palaces of crystal and gold and silver and of marble and granite. And this is what I think St. Peter found as he worked with love, following the methods of the Master, with the great symbol which was divine showing itself in his words and in his works. He had learned one thing which is the end of all religion, the end of all creeds, the end of all forms of

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worship,—the realization, the personal realization of God. Why are we hungry for divine things, for celestial homes? Because we have not found God yet. Why do we antagonize one another in our private life, in our political life, in our church life? Because we have not realized God yet; for God is love. Why are we so full of sorrow and sense of loss in the time of death? Because we have not found God yet. We have been trying to find Him, but we have not yet found Him. Sometimes we seem to touch the fingers of the hands of God; but it is only for a moment. We do not feel them all the time. We are far up on the heights; the world has no terror for us; death has no mystery for us for a moment; then we plunge into the depths of despair again. What we want to do is to find God down there in the valley, and then every valley is exalted, as the old prophet says, and becomes a mountain. We want to find God not only in this sanctuary, but in the sanctuary of our homes and in the world. We want to realize God, and then we will stay on the heights; and we can never do that until that time; and then, whether men sing or not,

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whether men rejoice or not, in the hour of our loss as in the hour of our gain, in the time of outward sunshine or shadow, we will just fling ourselves into the arms of the infinite God, and every day and every hour will be a God-ordained day and hour.

A great student, who did much for the world, had reached so high a faith and so profound a resignation that one of his followers desired to learn of his private habits, and so watched at night before he went to bed that he might learn of his prayers. But he was astonished, while he listened, to behold him, after working all day long, as only a scholar can work, close his Bible, which was open by him, fold his hands, and say: "O Lord and Christ, dear Lord and Christ, we are on the same terms we have always been. Good-night." And he kissed the Bible and fell into a profound sleep. He realized God, and in the simple majesty of his nature he looked upon God and Christ as though they were constant companions: "Good-night, dear Lord and Christ. We are on the same terms we have always been."

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In a similar vein a little child is described as saying to her father: "Father, I wish you would pray to God. I am such a little child He will not hear me. You are a big man and have a big voice and He will hear you." And the reverent father took the little child up in his arms and said: "My dear, if God were surrounded by all His angels, and they were singing their songs and playing on their harps, and you should say, 'Our Father, who art in heaven,' he would say to all His angels and all His harpists, 'Wait a moment, there is a little girl away down there on the earth, who wants to whisper in My ear, and I want to hear her.'"

Oh, my friends, we are all little children! We think we must have a great voice and great influence in heaven to be heard; we think that in order to stay up on the heights we must have some intercessor which shall be greater and purer than ourselves. There is not any one of us so simple, so childlike but what if we should lift our voice and ask God to let us hear the divine voice which St. Peter heard upon the Mount of Transfiguration, God

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would not say to His angels and His harpists:  
"Silence, every one! A son, or a daughter,  
on earth desires to whisper to Me, and I will  
listen, and in My own best way I will answer."

Almighty and All-Merciful God, our Heav-  
enly Father, help us to be strong and childlike;  
help us to be wise and simple, that we may  
live always upon the heights and always near  
unto Thyself. Amen.



## II

### THIS DO

You may find the words of my text in the 28th verse of the 10th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke: "This do and thou shalt live."

THREE of the Evangelists give an account of the young lawyer who approaches Jesus with the question, "What shall I do to inherit life?" and the answer of Jesus is given by each of the Evangelists in practically the same language: "This do and thou shalt live." It is evident from the concurrent testimony that the young lawyer, or scribe, who approached Jesus was a man of unusual character and attainments. The enthusiasm of youth is exhibited in the account given by St. Mark, who says that "the young man came running to Jesus," and kneeling before him asked the question of which we are speaking. It is said

that after the Master had had a conversation with the youth "he looked upon him and loved him." And once again the remark is made by one of the Evangelists, that "he was not far from the kingdom of heaven." It is interesting to study the relation in which Christ stands to those who are seeking salvation; for it must not be forgotten that the words "eternal life" or "life" in the text are the equivalent of salvation. Salvation in the New Testament is not awakening from some torment, either in this world or in the world to come; it is not the superimposition of a character which has been wrought out by nature; but it is the personal achievement of that thought, life, and aspiration which characterized the entire career of Jesus, so that we are frequently told by the Apostles that if we would enter into life we must become one with Jesus. As Jesus himself says: They who would be saved must become one with me, as I am one with the Father. I am the trunk and ye are the branches, and the root of our united life is divine possibility and divine reality. The young man then was seeking after salvation,

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he was seeking after that divine life which Jesus was able to give; and Jesus does not hesitate to say that the condition of divine life is not belief but character. The text, then, indicates that Jesus does not insist upon a certain form of faith in order to realize salvation. Indeed, an examination of his position, as it is made known to us throughout the Gospel, would lead us at once to feel, with our modern ideas, that Jesus rather underestimated the value of the philosophy of religion, that he did not give emphasis enough to doctrine and to the great logical propositions that lie behind, if they do not enter into, the creeds of the present time. The world desires always to reduce its feeling and its thought to some series of logical propositions. It is not content without a political platform, without some theses of sociological or economic reform, not content until it has discovered some creed that shall completely embody the various doctrines as they are taught in the New Testament. - But we do not find this tendency on the part of Jesus. That he was a clear thinker, that he was a natural logician, I think no one will deny who

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studies carefully the New Testament representation of Jesus of Nazareth; but he places very little emphasis upon those things which have come to be so important to ourselves. He does not say, "Believe and be saved"; he does not say, "Accept the true creed and be saved"; but he says, "Become one with me." And whenever he speaks of believing in himself he does not mean believing something about him, but he means that union of life, thought, and feeling that makes one actually accept Jesus as guide, as interpreter, as the moulder of all events and all desires. Now, the world has been struggling all these many centuries to teach men to believe something about Jesus. The time will come, I think, when we shall understand what Jesus taught; not that we are to believe something about him: that he is a member of a trinity, that he is thoroughly human, that he is king in the moral realm, that he is a peasant among peasants—nothing of this kind, nothing about his miracles, nothing about the wonderful things which he did outwardly in ancient times. These all doubtless have their place, and it is well enough under

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certain exceptional conditions to make our philosophy in regard to them and to seek to interpret them logically and philosophically, but they are not by any means essential.

Jesus, you will remember, in the Sermon on the Mount, gives a kind of catalogue of the virtues which are exemplified in his own person, and he urges upon the disciples that if they would be his followers they must make these beatitudes part of their lives. Therefore, we must believe in the great moral truth of humility, in the great moral truth of purity, in the great moral truth of loving our enemies and blessing those who curse us. We must accept the Golden Rule, doing unto others as we would have others do to us. All these things are not a part of any creed, but they are infinitely above every creed, they are infinitely deeper than the profoundest creed with which the world is acquainted; and it is upon these things that Jesus insists. A little farther on in the text he says: "Not they who say 'Lord! Lord!' shall enter the kingdom, but they who do the will of my Father who is in heaven." And when the disciples are thinking of the

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great Judgment Day the usual tests that theologians apply are all overlooked by Jesus. The familiar words have often been quoted in your hearing—"They shall enter into life above prepared for them from the beginning of time, who have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited those who are in prison." In other words, these things are simply typical of a life of perfect love towards God and towards man. So that it is not what we believe, it is not the adoption of this or that form of faith, that shall give us eternal life. Jesus did not say to the enthusiastic young man: "Go into my church, accept my creed, adopt my liturgy, worship in my pews." No, it was a very different command that he urged upon him. All these things doubtless Christ regarded at their true value, for he was himself a worshipper in the Temple, he observed the feast days of the Hebrew religious world; but all these things were but the framework upon which he was building a character; and eternal life, the gift of the kingdom of God, was to be found in this character, resting upon everlasting truth. But Jesus goes a step farther than to assert

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that the gift of eternal life, or salvation, does not depend upon some form of belief. He says that every man, every woman, and every child that would be saved must do some specific thing. "This do, and thou shalt inherit life." In other words, before we can become Christ-like we must be tempted in all points and overcome temptation. We must learn how to cast aside our besetting sin.

Now, I know men say in these days,—men who do not think very deeply,—that sin is not a universal fact. Then the teaching of Christianity is false, because the Master declares that all men are lost in trespasses and sins, and his disciples re-assert his position again and again. Jesus does not assert that all men are equally vicious, he does not assert that all men have sinned in the same way that all other men have sinned; but he does affirm that we have all fallen short of the ideal life—every one of us has some imperfection which by operation of the will we do not conquer, and therefore we are sinners. Every one of us has some positive fault. I do not hesitate in asserting this in all humility in your

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presence, recognizing my own frailty at the same time. There is not an absolutely just man, a man who is altogether righteous, on the face of the earth. There is not a perfect woman's nature within your knowledge or the knowledge of any man or any woman. So that Jesus declares to the young man, who is the type of all those seeking salvation, If you would enter into life, if you would have the peace that passeth understanding, if you would be filled with the sunshine of immortality, then you must do this special thing that shall tear out of your heart your besetting sin. Now with this young man it was probably arrogance. He was, it is said in one of the accounts, a very wealthy young man. He had kept the commandments from his youth up, he had never given himself to a life of dissipation and debauchery, he had resisted the ordinary temptations of the wealthy young men of that time, and our own time, so that Jesus saw that there was something in him, an unusual strength, and that his power of will had worked out for him a character that was so beautiful in many particulars that Jesus loved him as he looked upon him.



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Or perhaps it was avarice, an avarice which made the young man love wealth so much that he must make the sacrifice in the thing which he cared most for in order that he might imitate Christ and find his life. It was because this young man was heroic and might become an exceptionally noble character that Jesus said: If you would be perfect, follow me. Sell what thou hast and give to the poor. Be a worker among other workers. Go down—even as Tolstoi has done in these later days—go down among the poor with all your knowledge, with all your purity, with all your honesty, with all your uprightness, living an heroic life, a martyr life, and you shall enter into a joy that never has come to you in the selfish, ease-loving life of wealth which you are now living.

Whatever his fault was—this young man had a weak point—his besetting sin was clearly revealed to the Master, and so he said to him: Cut off this besetting sin. If you would be saved, be penitent in the direction where you are weak and sinful. All these other things perhaps have been easy to you. Your inheritance of a strong physical body, of a clear, pure thinking

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mind, your early education and surroundings—all these have made it possible for you perhaps to obey the Commandments; but here is something that it is hard for you to do. If you would be really a great soul, meet your personal enemy, your private temptation, and conquer that, and come and walk with me, and you shall have that eternal life for which you ask. As it was with the young man in the old days, it is with ourselves. We each one of us have a besetting sin, an infirmity of temper, an unkindness of tongue, an uncharitableness of judgment, a selfishness that gives all energy and all life to self-gratification rather than to the increase of the joy of others. You love money too much, or you love money too little; you love to speak too much, or else you love silence too much; you are either too beneficent in your discipline, or else you are too severe or brutal, whether at home or abroad. Your sin is the sin of too great jealousy or too little personality in love; your sin is one thing or another; I do not know what it is. Each one of you here to-day knows, if he has thought about it himself, what his besetting sin is.

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Let me say, however, whether you know my besetting sin or not I am like yourself; and there is no salvation, there is no receiving of the gift of eternal life, until you and I discover what our besetting sins are and cut them off. *This* do—not something else, but this one thing do if you would enter into the power and the peace of the divine kingdom. But even here our teacher does not stop. He does not simply say that we must do something and then affirm that we must do some specific thing; but he goes further and says that in addition to giving up our besetting sin we must perform some specific duty. Not only the negative side, but the positive side of the divine life is brought out by the Master. He would have us remember that when we have corrected our peculiar faults, whatever they may be, we must give ourselves to the work of doing something that is good before God and before man. Did you ever stop to think that greatness in any department of endeavor is but a sum in addition. In other words, greatness is the accumulation of little deeds performed at the right time. The great man,

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whether in statecraft, in trade, in the church, or in the home, is the man who does special duties well, one by one, everything accurately done, everything done in order.

No man ever achieved a great success by a sudden blow. It is by one stone upon another stone, one stone still upon another, through many long centuries, that the Cathedral of Milan is built. It is by one good word, by one good deed, this good word, that good deed, performed or spoken day after day, year after year, through a whole life, that the splendid Christian characters are developed.

Is it not very strange that we underestimate daily life, that we cannot understand that the very dust beneath our feet is bright with promise, that every flake of snow and every drop of rain is moulded by precisely the same law as the universe with all its glory? Is it not very strange how sometimes a single little word drops into our hearts from the lips of our beloved and, "warms the cockles of our hearts," and somehow makes our blood move freely and brings a new joy to our eyes, a new strength to our arms? Is it not strange

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that we cannot understand that the eternal life is only a sum in addition, is only the piling up in great stacks of these single words? If you would make life better, make yourselves better. One note out of key and the whole anthem is destroyed; one voice out of time, and all is confusion. It is one note by one singer added to another note by another singer, and all working together as one uplifting harmony that makes any singing worth the while. It is so with life—our words, our deeds, they are commonplace, they are the things that lie nearest to us;—giving or refusing to give, offering our word of comfort, or standing in silence, bowing our heads when we cannot say the word of consolation, weeping with those who weep—the little things; not something far-off, not something splendid, but these common and homely things of every day. They are indeed the stones, the living stones, upon which man mounts higher and higher, until he comes to the great splendor above. But as well strive to get to yonder window without a ladder as try to get to God without doing the duties of this world day by day. It is an old

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and familiar gospel I preach, but it is a gospel that must be repeated over and over again. We set out on our voyage to some golden shore, thinking that afar-off there is a world that is better than this world. There is not and cannot be any better world across the waters and beyond the shadows, if only we are using this world now and here, at this very hour and every hour of our lives as God would have us use it. Oh, to lift our heads until we breathe clear air in the midst of the smoke of the factory and the shadow! Oh, for some power within man so that his heart may expand until it takes in all men, the homeliest and the weakest; and so the love of the Master shall come, bringing what the enthusiastic young man dreamed about and wanted in a half way, but which he was not willing to make the supreme sacrifice that he might have!

There is an old picture by Murillo which represents a darkened kitchen, and moving about in the kitchen, lifting the pitcher filled to the brim, or preparing the cakes for baking on the grate, are angels, all clad in the robes of those who have come down from the courts


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above. No one seems to know in these days what Murillo meant when he represented angels performing these menial services. He might have meant that there are angels and martyrs without crowns, living in our homes and doing the menial services of our homes, that we never recognize. But perhaps he meant that women, and men, in their own places and vocations of life—those who are doing these humble duties of life, the duties that all the world looks down upon and some with disdain—that the women by doing the duty that lies nearest to them are making their own angels; that all the time in these smoky and darkened rooms, where women work by the day and week and month, unrecognized, they are making their own angel representatives, and something of God, and something of life, and something of peace—that peace that passeth understanding—is creeping into their faces every hour and every day. Perhaps Murillo meant too that the revelation of life shall be made and then we shall have angels where we now have brave-hearted servants. Certainly it is true that the angel in man and the angel in woman is first

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discovered in the performance of humble and daily duties, or the duties that lie nearest to one.

It was Michael Angelo who said that if any one tried to do a perfect thing he must needs grow better and more religious every day, because God is perfect. And so I think that Christ means to teach us, as we confront the great problem of salvation, that if each one of us would strive to do something perfect—I do not care what that something is—it may be in the department of business, which men are very apt to degrade when they ought to exalt it—it may be in the study, in the drawing-room, in the kitchen—it may be in the street,—it does not make any difference what it is, whether we are making a statue like Angelo, or singing a song like some great vocalist, or doing our work professionally—it does not make any difference where we are working or what we are doing, if it be honorable, if only we try to do something perfect. Let us make our trade just as perfect as possible; let us make our study just as perfect as possible, our home life just as perfect as possible; and by doing this





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we shall of necessity enter into eternal life—that is, we shall of necessity be saved. Day by day we shall grow better, we shall grow more religious, we shall grow more Godlike, because God is perfection.

Almighty and All-Merciful God, our Heavenly Father, help us to do our duty, whatever it may be, with a desire for perfection; help us to understand our besetting sin, our peculiar fault, whatever it may be, and help us to overcome that sin and that fault; and doing our duty day by day, may we grow into the divine life and find that peace which passeth understanding. In Christ's name. Amen.

### III

#### CONSOLATION

“Are the consolations of God small with thee?” These words may be found in the 15th chapter of the Book of Job, the 11th verse.

IN one of the national museums of Paris there is a representation by Bouguereau of The Virgin, The Consoler. A broken-hearted mother lies unconscious in her grief across the knees of the Virgin, while at the feet of the Virgin lies a dead child, with the broken flowers just fallen from its hand. The face of the Virgin is filled with a kind of divine pity, while the hands are raised as though in prayer and benediction. There are almost always visitors before this work of the artist, not alone because of the interest of its drawing and the splendor of its coloring, but because the painting illustrates and embodies a universal experience and need. We may not be able to accept the dogma of

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the Virgin Mary; we may contend with all the force of our intellectual nature against the idolatry, as it seems to us, that marks the elevation of this worship into the places of the church; but there is, nevertheless, the expression of deep humanity in the sentiment that lies behind the Virgin, the Consoler. God had come to be but an angry deity, and judge above all the judges of the earth more terrific, hurling His thunderbolts of rage against the clinging and trembling sinners about His throne; or God was resident in the planets far distant, moving upon the wings of a cloud, sitting upon some throne in an illimitable distance, surrounded by clouds and darkness. No manhood in God, no human sympathy in the Almighty, only some majestic, some indefinable power, crushing the life out of the human heart, burying human bodies deep in the sands of the shifting shores of life. Why, even the Master himself, no longer the tender and considerate Jesus, had become a judge—a judge surrounded by all the emblems of his awful office—only a judge, looking upon man with the desire to find out the evil in him and crush the man and

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the evil with the same gigantic power. What wonder then that the human heart that was filled with loneliness, that the human bodies that were weary with the heat and the burden of the day should have desired to build up some screen between themselves and that angry deity, or that judicial Jesus! Was it strange that men desired to find the motherhood of God; that thousands—aye, millions—of the human race, having from their birth been eating the bread of narrow life, were warped and twisted until their bodies and their souls alike were but travesties of the bodies and the souls of men, staring in the face of the cold-eyed angel of death, were borne down by the accumulating difficulties and the ever-gathering intensity of life. Was it strange that the human soul said: "We have lost God the consoler. There are few of the consolations of the infinite love with us. We will create something that shall stand between us and the terror of our lives. We will find something that shall rest us when we are restless. We will find more strength beneath us when we are in the storms of life and drifting with the wind against the lee shore.

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We will find something that can comfort us when the comfort of human lips is of no avail." This is the explanation of the creation of the doctrine of the Virgin Mary. Is it not a true desire? Is it not a universal need? Is there not something in these human hearts of ours that we must needs all honor and respect, that gave birth to that idea of God in the motherhood, that made Him altogether compassionate? "Even as a mother comforteth her child, so will I comfort you, saith the Lord."

I do not mean to say, my friends, that you are all of you equally in need of consolation. Some parts of this room are in shadow; other parts are in the sunlight. It is even so with your lives—with mine. For the young man, some one has said, "God is the centre of great tasks, He is the fountain of enthusiasm, He is the crown of robust and masculine endeavor." Let us not take one ray of sunshine out of the world. Let us not urge men to be morbid in order that they may be consoled; for in morbidness there is death, not consolation. There are those who are swinging on the full tide of wealth and prosperity. God be thanked that

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their arms and limbs all are strong, that they may lift themselves up and thank God, as Sir Walter Scott thanked God when he said, "It is sufficient to live"—to live and breathe the world's air, to go down deep into the heart of things, to fashion and mould men, to grasp the gold and silver in life, to see the brightness in the gilded skies above, to find Almighty God in the gold beneath and the gold above, to find the horizons illuminated with the presence of angels of strength and love and prosperity when we turn our eyes away a little from all adversity and from gathering age, and from the end of all things. Let us be glad for all glad things in the world, and let us look into the eyes of the young and be young with them, as this old man [the Rev. Dr. Sawyer], whose letter I have read to you, almost an hundred years old, is as young to-day as ever he was, in hope, in strength, in the sunlight of his manly and handsome face and his manlier and handsomer soul. We start out in the morning, we walk in the midst of the fields, the fragrance of the flowers reaches our nostrils, the singing of the birds and the movement of the wings make

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music to which our feet dance. We are ourselves like the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; we shine with the reflected glory of the world. But we ascend a little higher—the atmosphere is rarer and cooler, the dangerous crevasse opens before us, the rugged sides of the mountain are before us. Oh, how they shine up there in the clear light! All the colors of the rainbow are reflected, but they are reflected upon the faces of the dead. Men and women have walked alone for a time, rejoicing in all things, even when they have left behind them the songs of youth, in the joy of the valley beneath. They have taken hold of the hand of their guides; they have taken hold of the ropes; they have climbed up the side of the mountain; they have seen the falling waters frozen up until the broad expanse of the glacier is before them. Danger above them; danger below! The fogs have risen; the sun rises not; and at last by some slip they are all alone, holding to the side of the mountain. The rope is broken; the guide is gone; friends have gone. Alone, and only death stares them in the face. Death before them; death behind

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them! What is their consolation? Some morning the young child and the man of strength and the hardy mountaineer that have started out upon these upward slopes of life are all found together buried in the snow at the bottom of the hill.

Is there not then at some time in our lives a gathering sense of need—a sense of the need of God to console us? We look in our loneliness, and we see not a face; we listen and we hear no voice. We ask men why our dreams have vanished. We want to know why our years have been wasted, why our life has been so useless, why we have not accomplished more; and at last we stand upon the edge of the great declivity that reaches down into the shadow of death. Certainly there is adversity; certainly there is sorrow; certainly there is loss such as Bouguereau has painted upon his canvas; but there is more than the brain and the hand of the greatest artist could ever paint on canvas or print on page, in death and love. There is the consolation of God. It were worth our while to go alone all our lives; it were worth our while to be stranded upon the rock of daily drudgery

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rather than not know God, rather than not find Him, who is life and under life and within life. It were better for us to find Him in the fagot and the torch, as many a martyr and saint have done, than never to find Him at all. It were better for us to give up our wealth, to give up our power, to give up our fame, to give up everything that enriches life from the worldly standpoint alone, than not to find God. All other pearls—they are pearls; do not forget that—all other pearls of life, the precious gifts that men gain because they are patient and persevering—all these pearls, Christ says, when you find the greatest and the priceless pearl, God, you will fling away as by comparison unworthy to be thought of at all. How then does God give us consolation, the supreme discovery of the human brain and human heart? How does God console us? Are there not many of us in the condition of the great poet who wrote that wonderful dramatic poem of Job, who might cry out of what seems to be a personal experience, Are not the consolations of God small with thee? You have met disaster; your flocks have been destroyed in the

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fields; your house has been burned to the ground; your children have every one of them been stricken; everything you hold dear has gone; and all the world seems full of dread. Curse God and die! Why fight out such an uneven contest? Is the world not bitter to the very bottom? Are not the dregs of the wine more than the wine itself? Are not the poisonous herbs that grow in your path a thousand times more numerous than the roses that you cull now and then? Curse God and die! No, said Job. I do not understand it. How could I understand it? My child that I loved dearer than everything else in the world has gone. I do not count now the number of my herds and flocks. I do not mourn now that I am disgraced among men of authority in the gate of the city. I do not count now that I am but a mass of corruption that no man can measure. I count them all as nothing—My first-born is dead, and all that I love is in ashes. Well, did not that old writer, whoever he may have been, get right down into the heart of human experience? Job said: I do not understand it; you are quite right; but I

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know what it all means a great deal better than you do. You come to me with your poetry, with your Scripture, with your priestly counsel, and your comfort. I thank you for them all but they are insufficient. I want God. I know there is a God—a God that made your priest, a God that made your minister, a God that made it possible for you to build your churches and fashion your creeds. I want God from whom all these things came.

In that wonderful poem, as in the drama of human life, we never find the real consolation until we have found God, as the poet in the olden time found Him. How was it he found Him? He found Him first of all as others as well as the writer of this great poem found Him in later times, as St. Paul found Him, as St. John found Him, as Jesus the Master of all found Him. They found Him first of all in the creating of what we may call the God-conscience. Our consolations come to us from God when we are first convinced that God is. The very thought that there is an infinite existence in the world, that is omnipotent, that is far-reaching, that is all-loving—the very

thought, when once it becomes a part of our daily consideration, a part of our daily food, is a consolation. You are on the stormy ocean. You have lost all power of calculating. The waves are more than mountain high. Frequent disasters have marked the course across the water at the season when we travel. The recent accidents have been so horrible and so far-reaching that the dangers of the sea seem greater to you than ever before. A sudden shock tells you that the machinery of the staunch old vessel has ceased to work. What sinking of your heart, what questioning of the officers! What does it mean? Are we going down into the depths of the sea? Shall we never see our wives or children any more? Shall all of our affairs go unsettled? Shall our songs be never sung, our sermons never preached, our books never written? These are the questions that come to us. And still that awful silence, that reaching out of hands that seem like hands of death. But when the wheels go round again, when the noise of the working machinery greets our ears, like the song of the shepherd in the morning when the sun

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rises again after a dark night, then we learn that the very best captain of all the fleet is on the bridge and at the wheel. He is no longer asleep, but he is at the post of danger and the post of duty; and then we feel that the wisest brain, the clearest eye, the most experienced hand, is at the tiller. Then we say to ourselves: "Roll on, mighty waves and seas! There is danger yet, but there is not such danger as we thought when our captain slept below. The right man is at the wheel; the right hand directs the destinies of the crew and the passengers." It is a homely illustration. Those of you who have been on the water when such things have occurred know of the awful sinking of the heart that comes with the first moment, whatever the bravery of the second. But, men and women, when such a staunch and able ship comes back to shore and brings our beloved safe and sound into our arms and homes again, is there not here some symbol of that mighty God whose hand is upon the wheel of the destiny of human life? Oh, the consolation of knowing that such wisdom guides the earthly destinies of man—the

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greater consolation that comes to us when we know that God is, that He is at the heart of things, that there is not anything in this world that He does not understand, that there is not any evil that He cannot overrule, that there is not any darkness that He cannot turn into day! But we are not to remember alone that God is a God of such tremendous power. He cannot let go of the threads that He is weaving in and out into the fabric of humanity. We are to remember, if we would have many consolations and God in our hearts, that God who is The Great I AM is also a God of sympathy. We cannot think of Him as others thought of Him when they flung up a kind of guard between their naked and starving souls and the majesty of God,—the Virgin Mary. Sometimes He seems far-off and unreal and we want some human object to take His place. Sometimes we find God in men and women. They are God to us in some sense. Their faces shine with eternal light, their hands are strong; there is God in them and we are grateful. We are to think of God as some being that is all goodness, that is all sympathy, that is all

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tenderness, that is just because He is tender, that punishes because He is kind.

Tennyson was a great poet, but he was more than a poet. He not only made poetry but he made manhood. Tennyson said once: "I am comforted when I remember the God whose eyes considereth the poor." In God's sympathy expressed by the life of the Master we would find the terms in which we may understand it. I remember well, as you remember, Jesus at the home of Jairus, when his daughter is dead. I remember him walking among the haunts of men and coming to the gate of the city of Nain and finding there the widow. All has gone from her now, because her only son has gone from her, and she stands unbuttressed against the storm and unprotected against the cold or the heat. How tender was Jesus as he looked down upon the face of the dead! I remember him with Mary and Martha and the risen Lazarus. I recall him, mild, considerate, never attacking others but for their good, never with anything of cruelty, or anything of jealousy, or anything of hardness in his heart or in his life; but somehow opening the sluices that

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reach out from our lives to the great sea of God's love, and letting the love of God come in in its full tide, until it covers us from every part of our nature, east and west, north and south, down to the depths of our sin, up to the very heights of our faith and love. God is, but God loves. And then we have the consolations of God, when looking at him in the light of the wisest teaching the world has ever known; under the interpretation of the teachers of the old and new gospels, as well as the gospels of every nation and every time, we come to the truth of God—the truth of God in regard to love, in regard to immortality. There is nothing anywhere but life. There is no death since God is and is in everything. We call something we dread death, but it is only larger life. We talk about the doors that are closed. There are no doors that are closed; they are only phantoms of our brain across the wide-open passageway that has no doors at all. We talk about hate, we talk about sin, we talk about death, and they all have a reality for us so long as we are living in opposition to the will and law of God, but when once we get



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upon God's ground, then death takes from itself all that is dark and unholy, takes from itself all that is bitter, takes from itself that awful iron that sinks into our hearts sometimes and burns us and scars us and lames us so that we limp forevermore morally and spiritually. But when we come to understand what God really is, in His love, when the truth has been made known to us that He is around all things and in all things and above all things—when this is not merely a phrase, not merely a bit of poetry that we think very beautiful on Sunday and forget all about on Monday, when we have learned to know that these things go right down into our empty hearts and fill them up with God, when we find that this kind of truth, this great gospel of joy and peace comes to us and rids our brains of cobwebs and opens our eyes, then we may see the good and feel the peace which is always restful and always hopeful, because it rests completely upon God; then we can say when our friends ask us of the consolations if they are few with us: "No, they are more than the sands of the sea. I am living with God always, I interpret life under His

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gaze, I have remoulded the experiences of life under His great and merciful touch, I have abolished death by abolishing sin and so living with God forever." "This is a dream," you say to me, "I cannot feel it." No, perhaps you cannot. I do not feel it as I want to; the saints far above us do not feel it as they want to. It is a gradual development, that I pray for and expect, it is a slow growth which you must be content with perhaps. But if you do not feel the consolations of God at all, believe me it is because sin of some kind still holds dominion over your soul—the sin of anger, the sin of cruelty, the sin of meanness, the sin of indifference, the sin of coldness, the sin of neglect. Why, you cannot know music unless you study music; you cannot know art unless you give yourself to the study of art; you cannot make a man of business without learning the laws of business; you cannot be a poet, a preacher, a leader of men without studying the methods of such leadership and work. And can you expect God will come with all His dignity, with all His greatness, with all His mercy—that God will come and fill you with

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His consolations without you even coming to His altar at home or in the church to receive them? God waits for you. God loves you; but God comes to you and waits. He cannot (and I say it reverently)—God cannot give you His consolations until you open your heart to receive them. The way will be long; the way will be weary to some of you, but the way will ever grow wider and broader as you feel that God walks with you, by your side, and that somehow He is chastening you by pain, He is fashioning and moulding you in the heat and danger and disaster and death for His own great kingdom above.

All-Wise and All-Loving God, our Heavenly Father, help us in penitence to throw ourselves at Thy feet, that Thy consolations may be great with us, that we may find even in the poisoned chalice of sin and of death the promise of immortal life and of that time when eternal harmony shall reign in every human life and from sphere to sphere. In Christ's name. Amen.

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## IV

### ST. PAUL

You may find the words of my text in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, 2d chapter and the 2d verse: "We were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God."

ST. PAUL is one of the most striking figures in the Apostolic Church. After the Master himself, probably no one had so much to do with the formative period of Christianity. There are those who speak of the wonderful intellectual insight of the man, of his profound knowledge of natural theology, of his patriotism, which was so great that he said that he was willing to be cursed for his country. There have been those who have spoken of the remarkable patience of the man under all the ills and all the serious defeats of his life; but I think when we consider the time in which he worked and his personal characteristics we shall

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conclude that the most eminent quality of his life was boldness. From the beginning to the end of his career he was a man of the most absolute conviction; he was a man who did not hesitate to express himself upon all occasions and under all conditions. Whether we study him as he confronts St. Peter, the head of the church in Antioch, or meet him in the pagan streets of Ephesus, or converse with him as he prepares himself to discuss great questions of philosophy and religion on Mars' Hill, up to the very time when we find him in the dungeon at Rome, oppressed by the military authorities of the day, there is nothing in his character that stands out more clearly than his moral boldness. And I desire this morning to consider in the light of the work of St. Paul,—that is but an illustration of the very spirit of the Gospel,—to consider briefly the boldness of the Christian religion, or the boldness of the Gospel. And, first of all, I would ask your attention to the fact that St. Paul was not a rash man. A great deal of rashness in this world is called boldness. There are those who precipitate themselves into conflicts, whether on the phys-

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ical, intellectual, or moral side, who do not take into account the methods and the means by which the desired end is to be realized. There are prophets in the world of sociology who, seeing some ideal social state at which they desire to arrive, without any consideration of the methods of Nature or Providence, without any clear apprehension of vital principles of universal laws, throw themselves into the great contest with existing institutions and existing methods, imagining that by just so much as they aid anarchy, by just so much they have brought within the reach of man the ideal social organization. And so, also, there are men in political life who imagine that the destruction of existing instruments is the establishment of better ones. Until you can build across the turbulent river a better bridge than the one that now exists it is the part of common sense, as it is the part of true political science, to leave the old bridge, however imperfect and worm-eaten in its piers it may be, until the new and substantial one is completed. Our necessity is to bridge that wide chasm between the theoretical and the practical; our

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effort in all our political life is to establish an ideal in our minds and by just as rapid steps as are possible to achieve it. But until we have some substantial basis upon which we can rest while we are enlarging our action and quickening and uplifting the conscience of the public, we would do well to understand that mere destruction is rashness. It was but the boldness of understanding, or of heart, that made St. Paul one of the great conservatives, reformers, builders of the world. It was my good fortune during the present week to ride upon the waters of a great river that has just been unloosed from the icy arms of the winter; and, broken into large pieces, floating down with the tide, and driven by the wind, there were portions of the river that were dangerous to the passing craft. It was interesting to observe how the man at the wheel watched all open pathways through the ice, how with the delicate turning of his wrist he managed the long chain reaching down to the propeller and so directed the craft without danger to its hull, through the paths that were possible, to the desired end of the journey. Some, not knowing the power of the great

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cakes of ice, not knowing the necessities of the occasion, would have driven the boat straight on for the desired haven in a line just like the line that is followed under the sun of the summer months; but the captain who knew the stream, who knew how far these apparently harmless blocks of ice extended into the water, guided his boat so that not a scratch could be seen upon her hull. Well, now, this captain in the river is the type of the man who is not rash but is bold, who sees his opportunity, who observes the opening place, the pathway that is imperfectly outlined to the one who is not an expert in these things, and drives on through every danger, beyond every possible disaster, to the harbor of his desire.

St. Paul was a bold man, I repeat, but he was not a rash man; he did not shipwreck upon the shoals that were about him the church which he was guiding to the larger haven; he did not recklessly confront evils and disasters which might have been avoided, but with a clear understanding of the means and the end, with a wise adjustment of all the instruments, he guided the great institution



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that is so beneficent in these latter times. So should it be with all those in the pulpit or in the pews that are administering the trust of the Gospel in accordance with the will of God and the design of Jesus Christ. We are to be bold, but we are not to be rash. The boldness of the Gospel as it is administered by the wise teachers and prophets of the Master shows itself first in its affirmations of truth. There is, perhaps, nothing more marked in this present period than the uncertainty of men's convictions. I do not say that this condition of the intellectual life is a condition of despair; on the contrary, it seems to me a condition of hope, because when men care enough for religion to examine the basis upon which their religious faith rests, when men are not content to accept what has come down to them from the past without examination of its value and its authority, then we know that their hearts are not dead and cold. When men accept all the institutions of the past, when they accept all the creeds and all the forms that have been of value in the centuries that are gone without any inquiries whatsoever, then you may be,

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sure that the decay of religion is at hand, that religion is rapidly passing into abeyance before other interests of the mind and of the life. But while I consider the condition a hopeful one, yet there can be no doubt about its reality. Men are disturbed in their religious convictions; men are wavering as to every statement in regard to God and duty and destiny. Men are looking for new proofs of the existence of the All-Creator; men are questioning whether there is any distinction between right and wrong, whether obligation is a figment of the imagination, whether utility is not the supreme end of motive and moral action. And in these days when materialism has reared its front, when wealth and luxury have become so common and the ordinary man rejoices more in the products of the soil and the products of manufacture than ever before in the history of the world, there has been a closing of the eyes to the reality of the immortal life. The old and sweet story of the Resurrection of Jesus seems to have glory and light only on Easter day; and men are writing ponderous volumes—they are studying all forms of Eastern philosophy,

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they are studying every new theory that is given to the world, whether it be a bold theory or a rash theory, whether it have foundation in intelligence or not, because they are desirous of knowing something about the mystery of the immortal life. Here again I would say that the condition is a hopeful one, because it shows that the heart is not deadened to the desire which has been universal for an immortal life. But the age is characterized by wavering judgment, by doubts in regard to this as well as to the other great essentials of religious truth. Now, it is desirable for us, in such an age as this, to go back to the boldness of assertion which is found upon the lips of St. Paul and the other Apostles. We are to go back to the New Testament, to find out what men asserted who believed with all their hearts, to whom God was an actuality and not a logical proposition—to go back to the lives of thinking men and honorable and active men who yet believed in duty, believed in immortality; and so I have thought it would not be unwise for us to consider how bold the Gospel is in all its affirmations

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in regard to these, the great essentials of religion.

Men are saying: "I hope there is a God; I hope that He is a being of infinite love; I hope that Universal Fatherhood and Universal Brotherhood are facts, but I am not sure of them. I am lost in the wanderings of the world; my brain is confused by the arguments of the scientists. The great discoveries that have been made in science, and in literature, the great products of art and the great institutions of education and of government have somehow removed from my thought and my view the great Church of God, the great Catholic Church, including all those who believe in the Christianity of the Gospel." It is, therefore, a good thing for us to consider for a moment how these men who lived so near to the life of Christ, who confronted all the difficulties of the first years of the growth of Christianity, felt in regard to these things. They were not bold in reference to any formulated creed; they did not insist upon any special form or rite of worship; and if they were in England to-day, where the fight of the High Church gathers in

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force until it convulses an entire empire, they would not be ranged either with those who insist upon candles on the altar and kneeling to the eastward in prayer, or with those who declare that all these things are popish and degrading to the intelligence and to the heart. They would be rather with those who are working among the poor and the outcast; they would be with the laborer who is seeking for his rights and gathering to himself greater rights and greater privileges; they would be with those who are intemperate, with those who are under the ban of crime against the State and against the individual; they would be teaching the old lessons of the Gospel as they are made known in the Sermon on the Mount. You would see them joining—not ritualism, not Broad Church, not High Church, or Low Church—but you would see them joining in giving the cup of cold water, clothing the naked, visiting those who are in prison. Remember that pure and undefiled religion is visiting the widows in their affliction, is giving unto the orphans in their loneliness and need, in keeping one's self unspotted from the world.

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The moment we involve ourselves in the intricacies of a creed, that moment we involve ourselves in mists and arguments, in doubts and in fears that have belonged to creeds from the beginning; but when we hold ourselves open to the sunshine, when we hold ourselves open to the incoming thoughts of the Divine Spirit, we become bold, not because we are dealing with the details of belief and worship, but because we have hold of certain essential things that have been believed by all and that form a part of the fabric of the truly Universal Church. And among these doctrines there can be no doubt that the Gospel is especially bold in reference to the Fatherhood of God. That is the key to the great house of the Father's building of many rooms. That is the key, I do not doubt, to the doctrines that are asserted in the Epistle to the Romans and in all the theological treatises of the latter part of the New Testament. Until we have planted our foot upon the universal love of God, until we recognize that we are all sons and daughters of the Infinite, united to Him by a kinship which means the final restoration

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## 68      A Message from the Past

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of good and the final victory of righteousness, we cannot get at the centre of the Gospel, nor understand the boldness of it. It is because God's love is beneath us; it is because there is a Father in the world that created all things, that directs all things, that loves us all and works in us all as well as without us all, that the Gospel is bold. That is why we insist upon it, because we are children of an Infinite Reason, an Infinite Justice, an Infinite Affection, and therefore are under obligation to perform in a finite way the work of the Infinite; and because God is of us and we are of God, we have no more doubt about immortality than we have about the earth beneath our feet, or the sunshine that is around us—something that is observed spiritually, of course, but something that is just as really observed as any of the materials and any of the processes of nature. There never was any doubt in the mind of Jesus as to God, as to the necessity of obeying the beatitudes, which he himself announced. There was no doubt at all in Jesus' mind in regard to living forever. Never a moment in his life career do we hear any note of despair;

and that was, I think, because he lived so close to God, and realized God so completely that Heaven was a constant reality to him. You say that this was the result of a life that was especially guided, that Jesus came to the world to reveal God and because he was in a sense His only begotten Son he was able to achieve this absolute faith in God, in duty, and in immortality. But the strange thing about it all is that after that Easter day, which we have so recently celebrated, the same consciousness came to all the disciples, even to Thomas, after the proof which he desired was given to him, the sceptic among the Apostles, the doubter among the men of the time—even he felt that same consciousness, that belief in God. “My Lord and my God,” he cries when the great truth comes in upon his belated vision. And so St. Paul, born, as he says, out of season, that sublime vision of the hereafter coming to him, in which he sees the face of the Master—no matter whether it is an outward or an inward vision, it is all the same a real fact to him, and from that time henceforth Heaven is just as real as Ephesus, just as

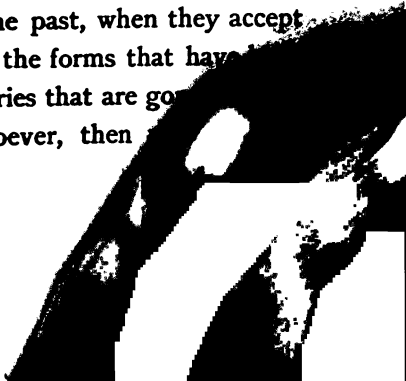
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that is so beneficent in these latter times. So should it be with all those in the pulpit or in the pews that are administering the trust of the Gospel in accordance with the will of God and the design of Jesus Christ. We are to be bold, but we are not to be rash. The boldness of the Gospel as it is administered by the wise teachers and prophets of the Master shows itself first in its affirmations of truth. There is, perhaps, nothing more marked in this present period than the uncertainty of men's convictions. I do not say that this condition of the intellectual life is a condition of despair; on the contrary, it seems to me a condition of hope, because when men care enough for religion to examine the basis upon which their religious faith rests, when men are not content to accept what has come down to them from the past without examination of its value and its authority, then we know that their hearts are not dead and cold. When men accept all the institutions of the past, when they accept all the creeds and all the forms that have been of value in the centuries that are gone without any inquiries whatsoever, then you may be

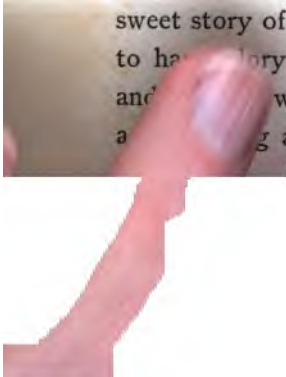
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sweet story of the resurrection of Jesus seems to have faded away and is only on Easter day; and the writings of the various volumes—they are all Eastern philosophy,

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carry this same boldness! O love that is registered in the Golden Rule, that finds due expression in all that marvellous Sermon on the Mount! If we could only have the inspiration and the power of love! How it bridges those chasms that seem so great between the now and the time when our beloved are not with us! How it inspires even the weakest to bear the burdens that the strongest do not care to carry! How great it is in that when it cannot mount on wings it crawls to the end it has in view! O love immortal, greater than all forces of nature! Oh, how thou hast revealed thyself in Jesus of Nazareth and in noble teachers and in noble men and women throughout all time! Thou art the essence of the divine nature! O thou love, come into our hearts to-day, that our boldness may be the boldness of splendid affirmation, the boldness of condemnation of all forms of evil; but most of all the boldness of those who know by personal experience the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ! Love immortal! Once again we pray thee to descend upon our waiting minds and hearts.

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All-Merciful and All-Loving God, our Heavenly Father, help us to be bold in Thee, knowing that because thou art with us we may do all things by Thy power and by Thy love. Amen.



## V

### GOD OUR HELP

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” One hundred and twenty-first Psalm, 1st and 2d verses.

“Our Father which art in heaven.” Ninth verse of the 6th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

ON last Sunday morning in the consideration of the Essentials and the Non-essentials of the Christian Religion we undertook to define the nature and the operations of the Divine Providence, so far as that is possible to the human understanding. But while we dealt with the statement of the Divine Providence and undertook to deal with certain difficulties which confront us in the carrying out of the great idea, limits of time rendered it impossible that we

should make a practical application of the great principle to the daily lives of the congregation. Feeling further that the treatment of the subject was altogether inadequate, although perhaps reaching as complete a statement as the ability of the speaker and the limit of the service permitted, I have thought that it might be desirable to finish the consideration of last Sunday morning and make a practical application of the great principle which we undertook to define and illustrate. And I do not believe that we can better carry out this desire than to remember the words of the Old Testament writer and complete or fulfil them by the words of Jesus Christ, our Master, as they appear in the text from the Old and New Testament; for certainly there is nothing more true than that all of us require help from outside of ourselves. The egotism of youth sometimes feels that it can accomplish the ends of its ambition, its desire, unaided by the forces or personalities outside of itself. There is something in the sublime enthusiasms of youth that flings itself against the laws of the material universe and compels them to render up their secret; there

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is something in the force of the young soul, charged with great ambitions and great desires, that commands the great thoughts and the great methods of history to enrich it, and no one will for a moment undertake to make the enthusiasm of youth any the less. It is like the primal forces of the universe that, hidden away in the very centre of the earth's crust, have made all the splendid beauty and all the inexhaustible riches and all the material world possible. But one does not live very long, or very deeply, without feeling that there is something of incompetency even in the strongest body and the strongest brain. There may be, humanly speaking, no limit placed to the enlargement of our knowledge. Investigation has again and again accomplished what the world has thought impossible; and no man would deny that there is something of divinity in every brain and in every heart, and that every man is in a sense, and every woman is in a sense, a creator, an originator, an enlarger, at least, of the facts and the principles and the riches of life. But the rapidly moving years, the inevitableness of the Divine Providence as

it works towards the meridian of life and then to the sunset, the changes that are coming even to the youngest of us that we cannot ourselves affect, and the loneliness that comes sometimes even to the young child, though the young child understands not how to interpret its sorrow and its sense of pain; the moving out of the circle of our experience of those upon whom we have depended and who have been the strength and the inspiration of our lives—all these and many other circumstances and events of life compel us to say: "I will look to some power higher than myself." If it be expressed in the poetry of the ancient Scriptures we hear one whose experience was like David's, crying out: "Unto the hills will I lift up mine eyes. My help cometh from the Lord, above and beyond myself, Who has made the earth and the heavens and all therein." Or if we feel the personal power of God and have the sense of His immediate presence which belonged to Jesus of Nazareth, we cry out: "O my Father, Thou wilt not forsake me! Our Father which art in heaven," in the words of the immortal and the universal prayer, showing

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how the universal human nature under the stress and storm of life flings itself towards God and seeks to find some resting-place in the midst of change and some peace in the hour of unrest. May we not take this great principle, which I understand to be the principle of the Divine Providence. The whole New Testament is taken up with the attempt to establish the Universal Fatherhood; as we saw in last Sunday morning's sermon—the love of God is most sweet and individual if we accept the teaching of the Gospel as the true teaching. Let us apply this great principle of the Divine Fatherhood and the infinite and ever-present love existent in the individual soul, in our prayers, in our loneliness, in our efforts after larger knowledge, in our struggle and in our battle for higher things. And first of all, do you not see how it is that we find help from God in our temptation? Every man is the subject of temptation. One man is open to evil on one side of his nature—some things you and I can reject easily. They have no affinity to our souls; our desire is not awakened. The opportunity comes to break some

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law of man, or some law of God, and the desire does not exist; and so by the union of desire and opportunity we do not fall into sin. Some other man, because he is differently organized, because of a different body and a different brain, finds in these opportunities a great strain upon his moral nature, because there has been the latent desire in his own heart, and when opportunity to gratify that desire, of which he was himself almost unconscious, comes to him, then he falls into sin, and we cry: "He has violated the rule of his manhood!" "He is a sinner before God," if you choose the theological term.

When men find on the side of their bodies and passions that they are weak and that they must put forth the strongest effort to overcome this tendency to wrong thinking, wrong feeling, and wrong acting, whatever the peculiar temptation that comes to each, what do they do? Very many men say: "My will is strong. I can do anything that I will to do. There is something in my character like granite—it will not yield. If only I can present this iron surface, this rocky surface, in my nature against

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this temptation and rely upon my will and all the resources of my will, I will conquer." And though while that man may have something that allies him to God, which we call the power of choice, or force of will, it may be that he is so constituted that at the very point where his will ought to serve him, it fails him. His will is strong in every other direction; his will bends and breaks only when the temptation to which he is individually open presents itself to him; and then—do you not see that then even the men of strongest will find that their wills often are incompetent? Temptation comes—we have thought these men very strong; we have thought they could resist any attack of evil, and then, all at once, in politics, in professional life, in society, we discover them thrown to the earth.

But the failures and the defeats on every side show us that men will not find the will always a sufficient help in the hour of temptation. Other men say: "I will throw myself into the world of effort when I find that my temptation is becoming very strong, when I find that my lips crave the wine that has made me a drunkard

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and that I love, or when I find that my passion is gaining in warmth and strength until it is entangling me almost beyond my power to overcome it. I will throw myself into some great service of the world; I will place myself a candidate for political power, I will study deeply the law of the ages, I will go out and I will take into my mind and into my inspired brain the facts of the physical universe and I will do some great service; and so I will conquer." Well, this is certainly a higher plane than the other, because we are looking up to the hills now; not looking, perhaps, to the Source of all strength, of divine power, but looking through nature up to that God. There is more of divinity in all men than in one man. There is more protection against sin in a great thought, in a great work, than in simply resting content upon the power of our individuality. But we have not yet won the victory. We find that even in the hour of our temptation the greatest thoughts have become weak. We find that somehow along the stream which we are moving there is something that introduces poison into the water. Our wills grow inert,

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our eyes grow dim, our muscles grow flabby, the ambition is gone out of us; because, unknown to ourselves, while we have been working, while we have been turning our backs upon our temptations and running away from them, we have not manfully met and conquered them. We find that the old sin is there, and that in the silence of the day or the night, when we are all alone, we look into our hearts and we find the old sore is still there. Our work at last grows nerveless, our great ambition dies like the leaves in the autumn. We have not gone yet to the highest source of help. And so I think it is that our old-time writers and our modern writers are all the time crying out: "Turn your eyes towards the hills; go to the highest source; go to God; go to the all-embracing spirit of the Almighty Father; throw yourself upon the Divine Providence; get good in your heart and the evil must needs be crowded out." Conquer yourself by throwing yourself into harmony with the divine law. In other words, cry, not alone by your lips but by your words and by your works in daily life, Our Father which art in heaven and upon the

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earth. And so you will be brought face to face with the errors of your life, with the sin of your life, and so you will be able to strangle it and bury it fathoms deep.

I think there is a great moral lesson in *Silas Marner*. You remember it doubtless. The poor fellow is misjudged and condemned and scorned by the villagers of his childhood. He goes out into the world alone to fight his battle, hating everybody, growing harder and more scornful of the successes of other men, because he has been robbed of his good name and of the opportunity to gain a livelihood. You remember how he came at last to be a miser, working alone over his loom and doing nothing else—counting over his gold pieces in a shining heap every night. Coming back one night, after a brief visit to the village, he finds his gold gone. He hates the human race the more. He was robbed at the beginning and he is robbed at the end! What is there for him to do but to curse God and die! And out into the night he rushes, to come back a little later and see what he thinks is his heap of gold replaced; but he finds it the golden hair of a

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little child who has been lost and wanders into his hut and seeks protection there. And you know how the little child works her way into his heart. The love of that little child, to state it differently, takes the place of the hate of man. And little by little; as he watches and tends the little child, as he brings the food to the little lips, as he fashions life for that little child, the hate is driven out by the higher love. It is so always in the world. The little child was God knocking at the door of the miser, and when the little child got in, little by little it cleansed the chamber of the miser, and the old man prays at last the silent prayer, because unconsciously to himself he has been brought to the Divine Providence through this little child. That is the way to overcome our weaknesses, whatever they are. Bring good in, bring God into the heart; crowd out all the evil, destroy the principles of wrong by good principles, by high helps, by calling upon God, by looking up into the divine, ever-loving face. And as we find help instead of temptation; so it is we find joy instead of sorrow. Sorrow is a factor in the world we strive to get away

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from. When we are young it is very blessed that we do not have to solve the problem of sorrow, but it is not very long before affliction comes. How are we to find the blessing of sorrow; how are we to bring sunshine out of shadow, and turn the cold glare of snow and ice, when our hearts are shivering, into the glow of the summer days? "Well," men say when they are called upon to meet sorrow, "I will harden my heart. I loved some one once; she was taken from me—he was taken from me whom I honored as above all other friends in the world—the little child whom I taught to walk, holding on to the strings of the little apron; oh, the holy procession, more holy than the processions of saints and monks, the procession of fathers and mothers led by the little child as he learns to walk out into the world! But the little child scarce stepped to the threshold ere its little feet grew weak. Its little eyes glazed—the only memory of the little child is a memory of an unfinished life, a prophecy that has never been fulfilled; and the unused shoe and stocking, there in the well-remembered place, are witnesses to days

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and nights of tears and loneliness. The world has sorrow in it, the world has joy in it; it has weakness as well as strength. "Well," men say then, "I will harden my heart, I will never love anything or anybody any more. What is the use? I will be strong. I want nothing of God and I want nothing of man. I will live alone. I will not let the tendrils of my affections wind around any object, for everything changes." Do you suppose such a man conquers his sorrow? Do you suppose a man like that has found any help in the emergencies of his life? You know it is not so. Or some may say, of different temper and character: "Well, I have lost everything; I am full of sorrow; I will fling myself into dissipation; I will dance the giddy dance until I forget; I will quaff the wine until my brain and my heart are soaked in oblivion. I will enjoy myself so much among those who are full of laughter and of gayety that I will forget the old days!" And has such a man gathered strength in the midst of the changes of life? A thousand times no. He is a weakling, he is a defeated man. He is an object of condemnation to the

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thoughtful everywhere. He is an object over which the angels of God weep. But when a man says, in the hour of his loneliness and sorrow: "I will turn my eyes unto the hills; I will look not down into the valley of life, but up to the peaks; I will fling myself into the arms of the infinite God and know that, though I cannot understand His providence, there is an overruling Will that will bring joy out of sorrow, that makes even pain itself the doorway to higher manhood and womanhood." When a man then calls upon God, when he feels the infinite power of God working in his heart, though the tears still come sometimes, he will grow stronger every day, a new light will illumine his face and shine in his eyes, a new helpfulness.

We say, sometimes: "Such a man or such a woman does not help me. They know vastly more than I know; they are greater in achievement than I am, and yet somehow they do not help me." It is sometimes because these men and these women have not experienced sorrow, because they have not gone down into the heart of things, because they have not learned

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to cast their eyes to the heavenly heights and to feel always that whatever they know, whatever they do is but a gift from the infinite God, the source of all things. And sometimes you will find men and women who do not know as much as we know, who have not achieved as much as we have; and yet whenever they come into our presence they seem to bring a benediction, though it be a silent benediction. There is something that radiates from their personality; it quickens the throbs of joy in our own lives and rings in an undertone the old requiem of dead days and dead souls. Sometimes such a personality makes us seem above our chant of sorrow . . . . .

So that when we meet our sorrow in this way, saying, "God is in sorrow; there is Divine Providence in the world; God knows it all," then we can throw ourselves into line with the great facts and laws of the universe and conquer our sorrow. And our sorrow becomes a bright robe, like the angels' robes; our sorrow becomes a true revelation, a true manifestation of God, and the essence of all spiritual things.

May I say very briefly in conclusion that this

same great thought of the Divine Providence is the necessary power for us when we seek noble achievement. Men say, as they say in the hour of temptation and sorrow: "I will fight my battle alone; I will show men that there is some substance in my brain, that there is some power in my will, that I can determine, that I can accomplish." And there is nothing to be condemned in this spirit unless the spirit end with these declarations and these methods of action. But he who climbs highest and he who delves deepest begins by winning God to his side, and he accomplishes most who looks up to the source of the highest help and brings that help into all the high and common deeds of daily life. I think it was this thought that was in the mind of Milton when he sat in that dark and lonely chamber as a young man, surrounded by the evidences of want, and called upon the name of the Highest and promised himself and his God that before he died he would write a poem that should live forever. I fancy that this was the thought understood, or not understood, in the mind of the one who has been called the "magician of the nineteenth



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century," when one of his lamps burned out and was destroyed at the end of a month and it was said in an elaborate article in the chief magazine of the day: "It is all very well as a toy, but it has no use as a tool." And for five long days and five long nights in succession he worked and finally presented that illumination which is so great a benefit in these later days. I think that he called upon the divine power that is resident in nature; that he found help above himself. There was the will of a man, but there was something more than the will of a man. And when Professor H——, in oft-quoted words, told his students to take off their hats when he was about to make an experiment in electricity, because he was "about to ask God a question," it showed how even in the lower investigations of man he called upon the help from the hills. The man who recognizes universal law and universal love in the universe, that man, when he does that, goes to the real source of power and makes achievement real.

Let us not forget then that the Divine Providence goes with us wherever we go, that the

practical application of the divine principle is to be found in the hour of temptation, in the hour of sorrow and the day of achievement. Lift up your eyes unto the hills and ye shall see your Heavenly Father giving you victory.

All-Wise and All-Merciful God, our Heavenly Father, help us to throw our souls into the great stream of divine events, that we may meet Thee everywhere, on the crowded street, in the solitary study, in the workshop, and in the home; and, finding Thee, live with Thee, and so overcome every temptation, transfigure every sorrow, and win our grandest achievement. In Christ's name. Amen.


## VI

### DIVINE LOVE

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” are the words which may be found in the 26th verse of the 6th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

THE word “providence” occurs in the Bible but once, and then it is not applied to divine agency, but to human agency. When Tertullus stands before the ruler Felix, accusing St. Paul, he says: “Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence.” But while the word “providence” is not found but this once upon the pages of the Bible, the fact of providence is the basis of every book. From the first chapter of Genesis to the last

chapter of the Book of Revelation the presence and the power of the Infinite Creator and Preserver of men are announced. Indeed, whatever the critics may say of this collection of books which we call the Bible, no one will deny that from the very beginning to the very end of the scriptural revelation God stands out. His providence is illumined with a glory that is not of the earth. But while we may find the Psalms and the drama of Job filled with beautiful images of the invisible Source of all things, of the Protector of the universe, while the Epistles are redolent with the fragrance of the inward consciousness of the Divine Spirit, the thought of God's Providence reaches its culmination, its finest and completest statement, in the words of Jesus of Nazareth. And while the sermons of the greatest preachers that the world has ever known have one by one been relegated to dusty shelves, while hundreds of volumes, encased in wondrously beautiful bindings, no longer attract the eye of man, the Sermon on the Mount lives on. The preacher of Nazareth o'er-tops all other preachers; and when he speaks the most eloquent sentences



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are forgotten. I think if we were able to solve the reason for this attractiveness, for this perennial power of the one greatest preacher, we should find it in the sense that that man had, that that divine soul had, of the 'ever-present and the ever-controlling God. So that while churches differ as to forms of worship and of creeds, while men differ in methods of administration, when all these non-essentials have been brushed away, when the unimportant definitions of the nature of God and His government have been pulverized and have disappeared before the light of the Gospels' interpretation, then we have come back to the simplicity of the idea of the Divine Providence, we have discovered that there is in the world a first great cause indeed, from which all things proceed, for we have found that that first great cause is our Infinite Father—that the centre of all things is the Divine Spirit, and that the Divine Spirit is love. We pray for strength that we may solve the problems of the material world, and we do well; but when we have followed the secrets of nature into her most sacred chambers, a voice beyond the wall calls us to

deeper chambers of truth, and it is the voice of the Omnipotent God. It is the tender appeal of love.

It is my purpose to consider for a few Sunday mornings the Essentials and Non-essentials of Christianity, and I desire this morning to place the emphasis upon what is above everything else essential in the teaching of Christ, which I identify with this statement: He declares in the words which I have read to you this morning, which I read often to you because I love them so much and look upon them as the highest interpretation of God's nature and man's character and destiny, that just as by the laws He has established in the physical world—the fowls of the air following out the instincts which God has given them, which is a necessary part of the Divine arrangement—the fowls of the air are fed. They do not sow, they do not reap, they do not gather into barns, but they do obey the God which is within them in the form of instinct, and so they reach the limit of their possibilities; and they are fed and they are clothed as no great king of Oriental days or modern days was ever

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fed or garbed. The whole chapter, from which I have taken but a single precious stone, is like a great string of precious stones that are beyond estimate in price, and they are also precious to us because at every passage, at every side, in every part of their constitution, they are reflecting, they are lighting up the love of the universe, which is like the sun, a greater light than any other.

It has sometimes been said that there is no evidence of order in the universe. Jesus was not troubled by such declarations as these. Or, if men have been compelled to discover order and beauty in the universe, they have said they are the result of chance. To use the illustration of another, it is as though we were to take the alphabet and throw it, pell-mell, into a basket, then, without any order or design on our part, draw out by chance the various letters of the alphabet. "If," say these of whom I am speaking, "if we should continue this process long enough, the result would be Shakespeare, or Milton." I wonder if it does not require a greater stretch of the imagination to suppose that Shakespeare's dramas were the

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result of chance than it does to imagine that there was a brain, or several brains, who worked together to produce Shakespeare. No man, unless he were mad, would account for the problem of Shakespeare and his work in this fashion. No man, unless he were mad, would undertake to account for this universe, which is infinitely more remarkable, by a similar process. Multiply day by day, night by night, figures which you may have selected, during every year of your life, and live an hundred years to do this work, and when you have done it, then multiply this result ten thousand times, and then cube and square it all, and you would not have begun to do what it would be necessary to do to form Shakespeare, to say nothing of the world, by such chance. But while there is order in the universe it is essential for us to remember that this order is beneficent order; and Jesus solved the whole problem by declaring that God was the Infinite Father, who loved the just and the unjust, who loved the good and the evil—not alike, but loved them both. His rain and His sun come upon all, His laws are absolute, they are uniform,



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they are inexorable; but order and beauty and law are the expression of a primal fact that is greater than any one of them, and that is Love. St. John lived all his life before he arrived at this conclusion. He sought for God everywhere, in the empires and the republics of ancient times; he sought Him in wrath and in military force; he sought for Him, but he did not find God in the highest and noblest sense until he had arrived at that point when he could write the words which you will remember are found in his Epistles, where he declares again and again that "God is love" and that they who do not love cannot know God. But while it is essential for us to believe that there is a divine order in the universe resting upon beneficence and that "all things must work together for good to those who love the Lord," that is, bring themselves into the right relations with God, there are difficulties that are forever confronting men. Jesus himself had these difficulties. If there were no further evidence that Jesus was a man, tempted in all points as we are, we should find it in those days of sorrow that came to him. How many times he

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struggled with loneliness; how many times he went away from the haunts of men, out of relation temporarily with men, feeling the iron of bitterness burning his heart; feeling how friends misunderstood him, how they rejected him, how they crowned him with laurels that faded when they were placed upon his brow, and denied him the only crown that any honest man wants—the crown of duty well done, sincerely earned! How he went among men that misunderstood him, that hated him, reviled him, and at last crucified him! “Father, Father, why hast Thou forsaken me!” “Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me!” were the words of Christ; they were the words of the human agony that is universal. You have uttered them, I have uttered them. If you have not yet reached that crisis in your life when they came as the natural expression of your soul, the day will come when you will utter them. Yes, there is evil in the world. No man can deny there is sorrow in the world.

We look out upon the calm and peaceful

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appearance of nature in the summer-time, or in the autumn if you will, and wherever you gaze you see the long stretch of meadow, green or brown, beautiful alike in either color. You see the rocks that have been marked by nature and smoothed down until they have become a part of the long sweep of scene; and you see the streams, flowing quietly on through the deep chasms which have been carved out by the iron hand of Nature, through perhaps changes that no man can count. And all is peaceful. But go a little deeper down there under the sod, and beneath the verdure of the trees, you see how the fire has been burning. If you could go down deep enough you would find fire still burning. If you see Nature in all its forms of life striving with every other form of life in the survival of the strongest; if you see the great contests and know what they mean; if you see with the eye of science the long struggle that has been going on and still goes on, you say sometimes: "Oh, yes, there is not so much evidence of love in the universe. It is not a Divine Providence. I was a mere sentimentalist when I said these things. Now

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I am old, I am alone, I am neglected, I am despised of men, the world hates me. I almost hate the world." There are such all around us, men and women, but I beg you to consider when thinking upon such personal experiences, or upon such teachings of science, that you are reading nature backwards, not forwards. In other words, you are passing from the bright and the beautiful and the orderly which you see all around you back to the process. You are forgetting the product and you are considering only the process. How many processes there are in the world of manufacture that seem absolutely sacrificing; but you know that the fire in the furnace, you know that the loom, that all the various tools and instruments of the factory have a purpose. You know when they tear, when they rack, when they burn, they are doing it for an object. They are taking the dross out. They are making the steel, the gold, the silver. They are discarding the bad thread in order that they may put in the good thread, and make the fabric what the idea of the inventor and the manufacturer intended. So that when you read

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nature you go back to these processes, you go back to the earlier days in the history of the universe and you see that all is travail. John Stuart Mill said: "When we study nature without prejudice and without partiality we shall discover that the Creator of the universe designed that His children should have happiness." The great preponderance is preponderance of good; and when in the midst of the process that is not yet completed, you and I are sometimes despondent, you and I sometimes question the Divine Providence, are we just? Are we right? As well say to the iron-master, or to the assayer of gold, or to the maker of Gobelin tapestry: "You shall not pay the price of the result which you desire. You shall not destroy anything, though it be an obstacle in the way of the end toward which you labor."

Yet men may say when they see the problems of evil: "Yes, but while all this is true I perceive that there is law in the universe. How can there be Divine Providence governing and directing all things and yet a uniform law?" I think our whole difficulty

arises from definition. What is a law? Is law a god? Can we give it all the attributes of an intelligent being; or is law something greater than an intelligent being? There is no mystery in a law when you come to ask, face to face: "A law—what are you? What are you about in the world? What is the ground upon which you stand and lift yourself up between me and my God, my love?" And when you look Law in the eye he says humbly: "I am nothing, nothing so terrible as you thought. I am only a word of the Almighty; I am only a tide of Infinite Love, flowing into the caverns of the empty places of life; I am only the Divine Spirit flowing like a great wave into your own heart." Law in the world of science is but a summary of forms; it is a catalogue of things that men have observed. It is not an explanation, and never by any intelligent scientist was declared to be an explanation, of facts. And so a law of nature, however uniform it is, when reduced to its lowest terms is God in action, God's method, God's way of doing things. And God working in these ways is always a God of power, is always an

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omnipresent spirit; but above all is a God of love. And there is not a law in all the universe, to come back to the terms of daily life, there is not a law in all the universe touching physical things, touching spiritual things, touching the angels above—there is not a law that is not the expression of Divine love. There is no free agency that can finally antagonize the will of God; otherwise, you would enthrone man upon the highest place and relegate God to an inferior place. The human agency of which you speak is free will only within given limits; but I beg you to remember that this love of God which is ever present in our homes and in our hearts can accomplish some things that we in our false conception of law forget. I ask you, my friends, whether it be not possible for man to interfere with law. You say that God cannot work upon your soul and my soul, that He cannot number the hairs of our heads, that He cannot watch over us in all our familiar ways, because God has established the laws of the universe and that He can never in any way interfere in the government of the lives of His children. Stop a mo-

ment. There is the law of gravity. Every building of commerce and every building of religion is an interference with the law of gravity. Without a support beneath, though but a grain placed there by the hand of man, yonder capital would follow the law of gravitation and go to the centre of the earth. Man can and does interfere with the law of gravity. How is it with electricity? How is it with the telephone, and with the car that rolls by our door? How is it with the wind-mill? Does not the telephone and the telegraph machine and the electric car—does not the wind-mill—interfere by the fiat of man with the laws of the universe? Why it is done every day. Civilization in one sense is a constant interference with the laws of the universe and uniformity. Over and over again, man, if you choose to put it so strongly, every minute almost of his life, man violates a lower law. Why? In order that he may bring a higher law into operation. That is the way it is with God. Divine Providence rests upon power of God to use law as a master and a maker. Shall God be less powerful than man? Shall He



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imprison Himself in the great network of law which He has made? God doubtless cannot—I say it reverently—cannot work without means to ends. Relation of cause to effect is the only thing which is plain in law; but God, like man, may change the cause and so the effect is changed. There is room for the Divine love working through the great manifestation of law in this universe; and as we come to this great conception of the Divine Providence, the essential thought in regard to God, we open our natures wide; we take the domes off of our frames; we open the closely shut door of our hearts and we say the whole universe is full of God. He is everywhere; He is here; He is there; He is above the centre of the sky; He is in all things; and He is Love. Oh, what strength comes to us; what courage comes to us; what comfort comes to us with this thought! And what a blessed thing it is to think that somehow all human sin and all the evils of the life that now is are overruled—were indeed permitted of God for the divine object which He has in view. Human beings who have wrought out by choice the divine life!

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O Providence of God, O Divine Love, Divine source of comfort and strength, come Thou unto us at this hour; and let the world in all its parts be blessed with the consciousness of that tenderness that watches over the very sparrow that falls to the ground, and that knows every pain and every sorrow and every fear, and that will destroy them all some day, as we mount into infinite light.

All-Wise and All-Merciful God, our Heavenly Father, help us to feel Thee with us always; and may we, in punishment or in reward, in joy or in sorrow, in life or in death, know that Thy spirit is with us and that all things may become good. In Christ's name. Amen.

## VII

### A SERMON FOR THE NEW YEAR

You may find the words of my text in the 22d and 24th verses of the 4th chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians : " Put off the old man. Put on the new man."

THERE could be no more appropriate watch-word for the new year than the one suggested by the words of St. Paul which I have just quoted. When they are uttered as I have spoken them they seem abrupt, unsympathetic, and hard. Very much the same feeling is experienced as when we read those words of the same writer when he says: "Forgetting those things which are behind, we press towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "To put off the old man,—” cry many, "to do that would be impossible." "I would not if I could, and I could not if I would." Certainly it is true that the year 1898 is con-

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nected with the year upon which we have just entered by a tie that cannot be broken. We are the result not of the thinking and the feeling, the desiring and the acting of one year, but of many years. The roots of our life go back far into the past, and our thoughts, passions, actions, are the natural fruitage of the thoughts, passions, and actions of innumerable ancestors. It were as easy for us to undertake to sever the sentinel oak from the wide-spreading roots that have gone far and wide in the search of nutriment from the earth as to break our connection with the years of the past and with the influences which have more or less affected those years. Memory is a great treasure-house. To bar the door and never take any of the gifts of memory to enrich and beautify our lives would be an absolutely absurd thing to do; so that when we consider our lives we must consider them not only as reaching out towards the light, but as having come from what you may be disposed to call the darkness of the past. If there is prophecy for the year 1899, there is recollection for the year 1898. It were as wise, when we have built a

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scaffolding a hundred feet high that we may complete a building, to tear the foundations of the scaffolding out and so cause destruction of the whole work, as to undertake to remove from our thought and from our character the stones of experience, or the timbers which furnish the material for life, which have been introduced and strengthened and buttressed in the months or in the years that precede the present time.

I do not believe St. Paul could have intended to teach so irrational a theory and to propose so cruel an alternative. What the Apostle meant was: In the past there are certain things that are wrong, there are tendencies of mind and of heart that are in antagonism to the will and to the purpose of the Almighty. We are living in a God-ordained world, we are surrounded and completely subjected to the laws which are the expression of His own mind. What the Apostle intended to teach was that every lust of the eye, every lust of the ear, every passion of the body that was in opposition to the law of the Infinite, that confused us in our search after the divine order, was to be given up. Every-

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thing that was in accordance with the law of God, every holy and every true act, every sublime deed of self-sacrifice, aiding ourselves and others into the larger and the holier life, were to be cherished as the seeds of a higher life, as the soil that has been prepared that we may produce a larger and a better harvest in the coming year or years. There have been faces in the past, there have been lives in the years that are gone, that it would be treason to forget; but it is our duty as we stand upon the threshold of a new year to take all the bitterness out of our sorrow, to take all the downward tendency out of our sense of loneliness and loss. We cannot alter the relation of one true life to another, we cannot make the chambers of our memory less lonely by declaring that we will forget the past; for, even while we vow forgetfulness, voices sing their way into our hearts, and the old days are back again, and the old faces are with us, and the sorrow falls upon our hearts very heavily. But the Apostle meant, as I think the Master teaches us in many ways, to analyze our sorrow, to get under the folds of darkness that cover our lives

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when we remember any pain of the past, any weariness of the days that are gone, any disappointments and any defeats — to get down below these dark holes and find at the core of every sorrow the infinite God, the love that never changes, and the love that is with us even when every one else forsakes us. We are to learn how, heated and worked under the hammer of affliction, we are moulded into purer and diviner forms; we are to learn the significance of life, even on its shadowy sides, and find God everywhere, in the day of storm as well as in the day of sunshine. So then, standing here once again with our new resolutions upon our lips, or half-born in our hearts, — standing here, we know not with what a future before us, with prosperity or adversity, with joy or sorrow, with life or death, waiting for us, just within the threshold we hear the great watchword of the New Testament: "Put off the old man, the bad man, the weak, the unjust, the unrighteous man, the man who is cruel and hard, the man who is intemperate, the man who is impure, the man who blasphemes God or drags down human nature in

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any of the ways of trade, in any of the customs of the home, in any of the silent thoughts and passions of the secret human heart—lay off the old man of weakness, the man who found no sunshine in life, the man who believed that everything was going to rack and ruin—give up the weakness of the old man who had no faith in human nature, who had no belief that God was working in political life, in the world of commerce, in the world of civilization, to bring mankind nearer to the ideal—give up everything that degrades your own nature, that disenthrones humanity, that takes away from you courage in the midst of the ills of life.

It is the tendency of the world to fret and worry, to cross bridges long before they are built—bridges which need never be crossed. It is the tendency of the human life which we are now living to believe that the last days were the best days, to feel that the future can never have for the individual, or for the work in which the individual is engaged, any blessing that can be compared with the blessings of the past. Men are living down in the



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depths of life, in the cellars of life. Why do not they live in the upper stories where the sunshine reaches them and where the view is broad? Why, I see men every day, in places of trade as well as in the study of the professional man and in the halls of pleasure, in whose veins somehow there have been dropped bits of poison—men whose faces are gnarled and tangled with trouble and with foreboding of disaster, whose word is not a word of buoyancy, and whose faces have not upon them the smile of encouragement. How much more easily would the wheels of life go if men would only oil them with a little more faith in God, in themselves, and in their fellows! How much more of joy and of worthy achievement there would be in the world if we would only lay aside the old man who trembled and feared, and be born into the new life, the life which is the life of the divine man, so completely illustrated and illumined by Jesus Christ our Lord!

There was a distinguished business man of our own city who at fifty-one years of age was many times a millionaire. At fifty-two years

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of age he owed three thousand creditors and had not a cent in all the world. But within five years he had gotten upon his feet again, and before he died he had paid every one of his three thousand creditors and stood before the world a man of substance. When asked how he could have accomplished this feat, when beyond the time of middle life and overwhelmed with the difficulties that had suddenly come upon him, he said: "It is because I have never altered the temperament which I received from my father and my mother. I never worried about the morrow, but I believed in the morrow and in my power to win success, even in the teeth of fate." And so the world has moved on from defeat to victory, in the life of the spirit as well as in the life of commerce. Men have met a thousand and one difficulties, have been overwhelmed by every kind of disaster, have gone down into the depths of wickedness itself; and yet because they have believed in God and have had a sunny disposition they have been able to recover themselves and walk forth free men. The coming year ought to be a year of generous

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power, ought to be the best year that every one of us has had during all his life, a year of larger accomplishment, a year of deeper faith, of sublimer confidence in God and in the future of righteousness in the world. That is the motto as it comes to us as individuals—Put off the old man, put on the new. See that by the realization of more of the divine you get more out of the world in this coming year than you have ever gotten out of it in any other.

But the watchword comes to us not only as individuals; it comes to us also as members of the state—the state under which the law of God expresses itself in forms of righteousness and of justice. In all governments there are two classes—the conservatives and the radicals. The conservatives cry for the old ways. Why, the other day I learned that there was a man who was still voting for Andrew Jackson, as he had voted when he became of age. There are men to-day who imagine that the government of the United States must follow the iron moulds in which it was first cast, and that there ought to be no adaptation of forms of govern-

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ment to changed conditions of national life. These conservatives cry: "The government of the United States was far more honorable, was far more in accordance with the law of morality and of justice in the times of our forefathers than it is to-day. The glory of the early part of this dying century was vastly greater than the glory that now shines upon us." It has been so in the history of every nation from the beginning of time. As men grow older their vital powers are sapped; they have less of enthusiasm. There are some men that have less belief in God and belief in the institutions of government as they express the will of God; and having known some exceptional character in the past, a character that was well worthy their honor and their praise, they imagine that the whole body politic is sinking away from the ideals of integrity, that corruption is eating up the vitals of the nation, and that there is no change possible but a change to the earlier methods and to the customs of the first days of national existence. This was the cry which met the intrepid Abraham Lincoln, this was the cry which met Wendell Phillips, which met

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Garrison and all the great leaders and believers in liberty and humanity fifty years ago and more. And when that decision of the Supreme Court which was called the Dred Scott decision cried that the old ways must be supported, when Seward of our own State said, "The object of government is security and not liberty," the voices of those who believed in the future, the voices of the radicals, were heard declaring that with the growth of national life the law of the land must be changed to meet new conditions and unforeseen exigencies. When Alexander Hamilton affirmed a century ago that the object of government was the establishment of justice, that the object of society itself was the establishment of justice, when Jeremy Taylor said, before that time, that "there is nothing more unprofitable in the world than a prosperous iniquity," they were only asserting God-given principles which underlie the life of a nation. But when we offer the principle of our text to the action of the conservative and of the radical, we are obliged to occupy a somewhat medium ground. We are compelled to say, as we say of the in-

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dividual life: "Put off the old man so far as the old man is unjust and unrighteous; but put on the new man so far as the new man is the representation of honor in political life and larger liberty and of a broader civilization."

I fear that as we confront the opportunities and duties of a new year there is danger that we shall forget, in our search after new methods and new political ideals, the real value of the essential principles that lie in the heart of our national life. There is a tendency to deny the value of universal suffrage. When we put on the new man, if we cast away the anchorage of universal suffrage, based upon the intrinsic value of manhood, then we shall stab our republic to the heart. If there be any form of military life, if there be any occupation of foreign or of home territory that shall involve the denial of this, the very central law of our republican form of government, then we shall cast off the old man to put on a weaker and a more undesirable national life. It is for us to remember in the presence of responsibilities that we cannot shirk, in the presence of difficulties which have come upon us, perhaps, by

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the providence of God, that there can be no permanent solution of the difficulties and the problem presented in the difficulties until our watchword be the watchword that led on our fathers in the earlier days—faith in God and faith in humanity—faith in humanity because we have faith in God.

And once again let me say briefly, our watchword—off with the old man and on with the new—is a watchword that we should claim as ours in our church life. The last year has been a year fruitful in changes to ourselves. We have, from a people with no place to put its ark, come into this building which appeals to the past, to the present, and to the future. We have seen worked in the fabric of our history names and characters that we never can forget, and may we never forget to speak their praises. We are standing here upon a foundation into which have gone the lives of many of the sweetest and the strongest of men and women. We are before a more beautiful altar than we have ever worshipped before in all our lives. We are surrounded by memorials of those who have lived with us in the strong and

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active service of earlier days, and the voices of the past join with the voices of the present in making a harmony which shall sing its way into our lives in all the coming years. In our church life let us remember that we are not to throw off anything in the past that was good, we are not to forget any battle-cries that have led us on to victory in the years that shall ever be sacred. We are to listen sometimes, in the silence of our hearts, for the grand and eloquent voices that never shall be stilled so long as we have memories. We are to build within the inward temple that is to be reared within these beautiful halls all the characters that have illumined life, that have added to our faith in all that is true, beautiful, and good in the world. In our homes, in our individual experiences on this side of the water and on the other side of the water, wherever there are great thoughts, wherever there are true loves, wherever there are noble ideals, we are to bring them to the present and carry them into the future. But, my dear friends, while we make this recollection of the past, while we crown ourselves humbly with the glory of other men's work



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into which we have entered, is there no cry sounding in our ears by the very promise of the past, by the very memory of lives that lived in their day and generation with progressive ideas, with great ideals, and with hopeful visions? By all these memories and by all these deeds we are every one of us under an obligation to go on toward the light, to make for ourselves a name and a record that shall be the name and the record of those who have put on the divine life as it is revealed in Jesus Christ. Men sometimes say: "I will accept nothing new in the church because I love the old ways so much." If our fathers had had such views we could not have the church that we love and serve to-day; and if we do not keep our minds open and our eyes levelled, if we do not hear Christ always calling on us to go forward into larger truth and into larger service, then our children will say: "They received great gifts from their fathers, but they were not broad-minded enough, they were not strong enough in faith to enrich these gifts and hand them down to us a still nobler heritage."

So then the call is the call of the new year

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that I would sound in your ears this morning —Put off the old man, the bad man, the weak man, and put on the new, the divine man. In all your relations to the Church and to the State, remember that there are greater treasures to be won than the world has ever yet dreamed of, higher ideals, nobler civilization, than the world has ever dreamed of in its most hopeful moments; and let us band ourselves together as citizens and members of the Church of Christ, promising that we will believe in the future, that we will work for the future, and that we will bring in by our effort at least a little sooner, the reign of perfect liberty and perfect love over all the surface of the earth.

Almighty and All-Wise God, our Heavenly Father, help us to do our duty as Thou wouldst have us do it. May we be every one full of hope to-day as we turn towards the great year that is opening before us, and may we know that there can be no loss to us if we rest always upon Thy loving bosom. In Christ's name. Amen.

## VIII

### REPENTANCE

You may find my text in the 17th verse of the 4th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

I AM to speak this morning upon an old-fashioned duty. There was a time when the consciousness of human sin was very keen, but that time has gone by. A distinguished French theologian was right when he said that in all ages religion has been very largely the acknowledgment of sin in general and in the particular of the redemption of the sinner. But the decay of interest in theology and the growth of material science have brought about a change of affairs. To a very considerable extent men have been influenced by the assertion of the materialists that virtue and vice are

only matters of digestion, or great world movements over which the individual soul has little control. If there be no such thing as sin, then there is no need of repentance, and salvation is impossible, as indeed it is unnecessary. The attitude of Jesus was a different attitude than that assumed by many thinkers of the present day. Jesus said that he came into the world to save those who were lost. "I came not to call the righteous but the unrighteous to repentance." In the very beginning of the Gospel record, as you have seen by the Scripture lesson of the morning, John the Baptist appears as the forerunner of Jesus, and the first words that come from his lips are: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He addresses his remarks to the Pharisees and to the Sadducees—that is, to the formalists in religion and to the successful men of affairs, the merchants. He addresses his remarks to those who are building magnificent temples, ornamenting altars with precious stones, making white the outside of the sepulchre that within is full of dead men's bones. He calls upon those who are collecting the taxes to be honest

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in their collections as in their assessments. He calls upon the soldiers to remember that before they were soldiers they were men, and it is their duty to obey the commands of Almighty God. Every individual who appears before John is urged to repent of his sins, and when Jesus has been baptized in the Jordan and appears before the people in the work of the prophet and the Saviour of men, Jesus from that time begins to preach: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The same old-fashioned duty, the same appeal, the same demand that the Jews had heard from the beginning, that the worshippers in the Orient had listened to, the old demand made for a man to look into his own face and into his own heart and estimate both on the negative and the positive side his relation to the law of righteousness. Are you just? Are you pure? Are you generous? Are you unselfish? What is your relation to the orders of the Almighty God? What is your attainment as compared to the highest ideals that your brain and your heart have had lifted up before them?

All through the Gospel record it is the same,

even with men to-day so blindly looking out upon the great facts of life—whatever is right—if men deny the seriousness of sin and hesitate to admit that every one is under the obligation to be penitent. Still the cry sounds down through all the ages since the time of Christ. When the Apostles were sent out to preach, they were to go over all the country preaching everywhere that men should repent. When St. Paul, the great thinker and the great philosopher of those days, educated in all the lore of the time, and yet a man going deep down into human experience, was awakened to his own condition, when St. Paul spoke about these great matters, it was the same great cry going out to the Gentiles. From the beginning to the end of the New Testament, in every Gospel, in every Epistle, men are urged to understand that they are before Almighty God sinners, that the best of them have fallen away from the standards that they have themselves set up, and that every human soul, however pure it may be, has at some time been spotted somewhat with the world. Repent and believe the Gospel. In the thirteenth

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chapter of St. Luke, in speaking of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with the sacrifice, and those who had perished when the tower of Siloam fell, Jesus himself said: "Do ye think ye are better than the Galileans and those who were destroyed by the tower of Siloam? I say unto you, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." It was no revivalist, standing upon an impossible platform and teaching impossible doctrines, no fanatic, but Jesus himself, who understood the value of the spiritual life,—Jesus himself cried: "Unless ye shall repent, ye shall all likewise perish,"—a very real destruction before those who do not repent and accept the kingdom which is at hand.

All through the history of the Christian Church, as well as among all forms of religious faith everywhere, you will find some more or less perfect conception of the sin that lies in the heart of man; and while this view of sin has been sometimes distorted and exaggerated, while the penalties that have been assigned to the violation of the law of God have sometimes been unworthy of our intelligence and contrary

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to the teaching of the Gospel, yet there can be no doubt that punishment is assigned to every sin, and that escape from punishment and escape from sin of all kinds is possible only through the door of repentance. Is it not, therefore, very important first to understand what is meant by repentance? How may we come to a knowledge of this divine life? How may we escape the destruction of our souls—the very real destruction that is prophesied by Jesus as the result of our non-repentance? There are certain false views of repentance that I may briefly refer to that they may serve as a kind of background against which we may present the New Testament idea of repentance. There is, first of all, the false view that we may call the sacrificial idea. . . . That is the reason why John the Baptist cries when he sees the Pharisees: “Ye generation of vipers! Why are you denying and killing the souls of men? You read the services of the Temple; you join in all the chants of the Church; and you stand before men as the representatives of God and the representatives of righteousness, and yet your hearts are hollow, your hearts are full of



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darkness and death and impurity. You sound your trumpets upon the corners of the streets; you tell all men that you are philanthropists, that you are benevolent; and yet you are murdering the souls of widows and orphans, and you are taking away from them the bread of life. Your temples have become like the sepulchre, which we approach only with fear and with dread!" A form is only valuable when it holds essentials; just as the shell of the nut holds the meat; just as when a beautiful house holds the family. When the family is dead, when only bats and disease and ruin dwell in the house, then the house has no longer any significance. It is only so many boards and so many nails. It is useless. So with the forms of the Church. When they hold the spirit, then they are valuable; when they are emptied of the spirit, then they are valueless. Now, the Jew thought that if he offered a sacrifice upon the altar according to the ritual of the Church, that was repentance. No, Christ said over and over again in that wonderful sermon which we may find in the Gospel of St. Matthew, in which Jesus speaks with great

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force in earnest condemnation of any mere formalism which takes on the rite and the ceremony of the Church. Jesus in this condemnation says, it is not true penitence, it is not repentance, doing something which is a sacrifice, like the sacrificial idea.

Then again there is the ascetic view, of which I spoke in a different connection last week. Repentance does not mean giving up this thing or that thing that is in itself good. It only means giving up something that is bad. In the Latin Bible used by the Roman Catholic Church, the text which I have given to you this morning does not read, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," but "Do penance, because the kingdom of heaven is at hand." That is, count so many prayers upon the beads; do some act which the priest shall assign in penance of your sin. I do not mean to say that originally penance did not have a spiritual effect, was not intended to be a motive by which we should spiritually transform our lives. I think undoubtedly it was meant to be just that in the beginning, and that in the minds of some spiritually minded Roman Catholics

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it still has that idea; but with the great mass of the Church it is undoubtedly true that to-day they think that repentance is the performing of some act that is assigned as penance by the priest, and that having confessed and received absolution, having performed the act of penance, then they are set right before God and before the moral law. But there is a fatal misconception of repentance here, because it is entirely possible for one to confess one's sin to the priest and to perform the penance that is assigned for sin, and then go back and perform the same sin over again, do the same wrong act again, and sink still lower into degradation; then return again to the priest and confess, perform the act of penance and be again absolved, and so get the advantage of repentance. Now, I would not so far misrepresent the idea of a thoroughly devout and spiritual Roman Catholic as to say that this is the intention; but I say it is the fact to-day that the great majority of the Roman Catholic Church imagine that it is doing something technical assigned by the priest that is required of us. No, not in the Jewish idea, not in the ascetic idea, or

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the Roman Catholic idea do we find the true conception of repentance.

There is another idea in regard to repentance which we may call the popular idea, which men and women generally hold to-day. If you ask the average man what is repentance, he will reply: "It is feeling sorry for sin." That is not repentance. That is no doubt a part of repentance, but it is not repentance. It may perhaps be called an imperfect idea rather than a false idea. Men have thought that when the human soul has been wrung with a sense of its sinfulness, when the consciousness of wrong-doing has spread over all the pathways of the soul until the tears have come to the eyes in awful consciousness of sin against God and danger in the hereafter, that this is repentance. If we study more carefully the New Testament, and especially the teaching of the Master, we shall find that this is only a small part of repentance. The word which is translated "repentance" in our text means to change one's mind. Now, what does changing one's mind imply? First of all a motive, and then an act. The motive in repentance is sorrow for sin; the act is

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reformation; so that we can understand why Jesus insists so constantly upon repentance. We must examine our lives, all the tendencies of our youth, all our past deeds, to decide in what direction our lives have been tending. Have we always been honorable in all our relations with men? Have we always been pure in all our relations of life? Have we always lived in accordance with the law of justice and the law of right? Have we been broad in our charities? Have we been earnest in our support of all noble causes, whether social, political, or religious? Have we given a part of our lives unreservedly to the building up of salvation among men; or have we been cold and indifferent, narrow and jealous, hard-handed and hard-hearted? Are we making our home life a heaven or a hell? Are we treating with honor and with tenderness those who are depending upon us, or are we treating them brutally and inconsiderately—I had almost said damnably? for there are men in the world who are condemning to a perpetual hell those whom they have promised to love and honor; and there are women who by frivolity, or weakness, or

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indifference, are burning into the hearts of their husbands the awful consciousness that they do not really love them. I tell you, my friends, we get into these ways in this world, we come to think that it does not make very much difference anyway. Perhaps we say: "There is no future at all; there is no God. We will eat and drink and be merry. What difference does it make whether we are penitent?" Or we say, perhaps, with a carelessness that is in itself a condemnation: "All is coming right at last. Sunshine will come to all men by and by. What difference does it make whether I am repentant or not, whether I make others repentant?" I tell you that there can be no hope for the salvation of the world until every individual is saved. I tell you that there can be no hope of peace for your soul, or for mine, or for the souls of any man or any woman anywhere, until you and I and every man and every woman are repentant for our sins.

I am not one that would unduly exaggerate sin, I am not one who would call upon you to fear the mysteries of the future; and yet, I tell you as one who believes in the final victory of

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good over evil, that there are awful roads and deep hells through which you and I must go if we do not repent of our sins. There are hells in which men live in this present life of ours; there are memories of days that some of us would blot out of our existence; there are events, about which the world perhaps knows nothing, that rise up against our souls, men and women alike, to bear witness to the hells that we have made for ourselves—by night lying awake and tossing on restless beds, asking how we may give restitution for what we have taken in the past—not restitution of wealth, not restitution of life, but of something that is better than wealth and better than life. Oh, yes, the world calls us, our personal experience calls us, to understand what true repentance is! Sorrow for all the past that is wrong, sorrow for that consciousness of sin that bears us down—this, as I have said, is only a part of repentance. We must add to it reformation if we would realize the Christian idea of repentance. It is not enough to offer a sacrifice; it is not enough to do penance; it is not enough to offer a prayer; it is not enough to get down

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on our knees in the midst of all the agony which I have so imperfectly described. We must see to it that we take ourselves in hand and change our natures. That is the hope there is for us all. Have we said words we would unsay if we could; have we struck blows that we would change into touches of love; have we cruelly wrung the heart of man or woman; have we dragged our ideals in the dust; have we been cold and indifferent when the world called upon us to serve the world—then it is for us to change our natures. We are to guard our lips; we are to guard our imaginations; we are to drive out the evil spirits from our hearts; we are to strengthen our wills, that we may be honest hereafter, that we may be just to our fellows, that we may do our duty day by day. That is reformation, and it is repentance. That is building up character, and it is repentance. That is what is demanded of us, and that is the reason why Jesus insisted upon it so constantly. Truly a rite and a form, a prayer and a resolution, are as nothing unless they are the scaffolding for building up men and women, and making character. And



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when we are striking down our character, when we are planting the seeds of faithlessness and dishonor and moral unrighteousness, we are planting for a harvest that we must inevitably reap. There is no repentance that can take away from us the harvest. We must gather it ourselves and we must eat of it, and we never shall gather any other harvest here or hereafter until we begin and till the soil of our hearts and plant there the seeds of a better harvest, of virtue as well as of vice. Oh, the inexorableness of God's goodness as well as of God's judgment! I think this was the idea that the Apostle had in his mind when he said: "Oh, rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance! for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation." Observe that we might change the words so that they would read: "Oh, rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance! for godly sorrow worketh reformation." And when in other places the writers of the Old and New Testaments said repentance was the remission of sins—when it is said that John the Baptist preached the gospel of repentance

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of sins, the blotting out of sins — John the Baptist was preaching only the same scheme that was in the mind of Christ, and which I have tried to illustrate and illumine before you this morning. What is the motive to this repentance?

The other day in a book store I came across some books that were published in the year 1830. They consisted entirely of the accounts given by an Anglican clergyman of calls made upon those who were dying and were impenitent; and the effort was made to show in these books how by the representation of the terror of hell in the hereafter nearly all those whom he saw upon their death-beds were brought to repentance and therefore to salvation. This book passed through three editions, and I do not know of any more horrible reading that has ever come under my eye. And yet this writer, in speaking of the motive to repentance, expressed only the common view of the first twenty-five years—perhaps of a longer period—in this present century. He said to one man who had lived the life of an infidel, that if he did not repent now that he was upon his dying

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bed he would spend an eternity of ages in a hell of fire and brimstone, where the devils would rejoice in the torments they were inflicting upon him. Well, this infidel did not repent; and I do not blame him. Such a view of God, such a motive to repentance, naturally turned all that was generous and just in that broad-thinking man into contempt for the Church and the clergyman, and into that feeling which Mill himself expressed when he said: "If God will condemn me for thinking well of Him, then to hell will I go."

No, that is not the motive that Jesus urged. Doubtless the Anglican minister was sincere. He certainly was so, or he would not have spent all the time he spent in striving to save these men by these most extraordinary and dreadful methods. Jesus said: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." That is, repent, because right at your door is the kingdom of God—all the blessedness of His law, all the tenderness of His love. God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, that they who believe in him might not perish, but have eternal life. It is the love of God all

around us, seen in a myriad of ways, that is our motive to repentance. How much easier it is to save a young man by making him do something great and good, than it is by saying to him, "Do not do this thing." How many parents there are who find certain tendencies to wrong in their children, who say to their children, "You must not do this thing; do not go there," and that find it very difficult to bring the son or the daughter to a right life. It would be far better, far easier, far more Christian, if these parents would say: "I give my children something to do that is good, and in doing the something that is good I will keep them away from the doing of something that is bad." If you want to fill your heart with great and noble things, then you want not so much to lock the door against evil as to open the door of your heart to good. In the parable in the New Testament, you will remember that it was to the chamber that was swept and garnished but empty that the seven demons came back. An empty life, a life that is not given to good thinking and to kind service, is the life into which crawl all evil thoughts and passions

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and imaginations. To live a large and generous life is to keep out the small and the ungenerous life. To love deeply and to love purely is to keep out the passion that is sensual and degrading; and to say kind things is to make it impossible for the lips to say unkind things. And this is the great motive of the Gospel—love, the kingdom of God, and all that it means of love. That is the motive to repentance, and that is why I ask you to repent to-day, every one of you as well as myself; for repentance is not one act at one time, but repentance is progressive for all time. And so we mount upward, forever attracted by love of God, in the face of Jesus forever upward, going nearer and nearer to that divine affection that Christ symbolizes, repenting hour by hour and day by day and year by year, until at last our souls are formed and reformed, and have grown into the likeness of Him who is forever the example and the inspiration of man. From that time forth until this very hour, Jesus began to preach, and still continues, saying to you and to me: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

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Almighty and All-Merciful God, our Heavenly Father, help us to know all of Thy law and all of Thy love that is possible to us; grant us to know that Thy kingdom is waiting to enter our hearts and perfect them and purify them, and help us, O God, to be in that attitude of mind and of heart that shall make us truly sorry for all our shortcomings and sins; make us ready to live our lives after the standards of the Gospel. In Christ's name. Amen.

## IX

### SELFHOOD

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”—words which may be found in the 48th verse of the 5th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross”—words which may be found in the 24th verse of the 16th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

THERE are two sets of texts in the New Testament. The first demands self-assertion; the second demands self-denial. One involves the assumption of power; the other, its rejection. What a splendid vista is presented to us of growth and achievement in the words, “Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect!” whereas, on the other hand, listen-

ing to the words, Whosoever would come after me must deny himself and take up his cross, what a long line of possible shame and disaster and want presents itself! The Apostle Paul somewhere says: "Covet earnestly the best things," and in another place he says: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." The textual difficulties are very great when you read the Gospel and the Epistles with care, because on the one hand there is positive achievement encouraged, and on the other hand there is a kind of negative life and negative character described. But the difficulty is not only a textual difficulty; it is also a practical one. Every man and every woman in this world of ours feels an innate desire to advance. Who can but feel that there is something which, by the ordination of God, commends him when he increases his physical strength, when he enlarges his intellectual force, when he accumulates wealth and social power, and places himself in an attitude of large control over men and institutions. There is a feeling of admiration, and it seems to us all a just feeling, when we behold a man the roots of whose physical life go deep



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down into the earth, who spreads the branches of his growing life over many, who gives of the fruitage of his body and of his brain and of his hands to large numbers in the community, and enriches life and quickens and broadens and elevates all our ideals and all our methods of existence. And yet from the pulpit we hear the cry: "Deny yourselves; take up your cross. If a man seize your coat, give him your cloak also. If a man strike you upon one cheek, turn to him the other cheek also. If thou wouldst be my disciple, go sell all that thou hast and give unto the poor." And again and again, particularly in the period in which we now are, when the Lenten thought is uppermost in the minds of the clergy and the priesthood, you will hear the Church in various ways insisting that unless a man deny himself and carry his daily cross, and perhaps make some special or particular act of denial the chief object of these days of the humiliation of the Master, he cannot be received into the kingdom of God upon the earth and be certain of salvation in the world that is to come.

But this difficulty, if you look at it a lit-

tle more carefully, you will find goes further still. So prominent has been this antagonism that it has disturbed not only the minds of Christians but the minds of pagans as well. There were among the Greeks and the Romans, as you know, the Epicurean and the Stoic and the Cynic forms of philosophy. The Epicureans said: "The object of life is to get all the pleasure we can out of it. Happiness is the end for which we exist. Let us therefore eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." On the other hand, the Stoics said that the only way to realize the end of life is to give up things. "You are not to absorb all that there is in the world that is beautiful, but you are to deny what is beautiful in the world, either in part or entirely. You are to live not in the palace of luxury but in the tub of the Cynic. You are not to live in the surroundings of education and refinement, but you are to deny all these things, and with Diogenes you will live a life that is contracted and narrow on every side but possibly the side of intellect, the side of morality." It is evident that before we can be intelligent in

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our moral life there must be some reconciliation of this antagonism which exists between the two qualities of life, self-denial and self-assertion. Immoderate self-assertion ends in what we popularly call selfishness. A man feels that his life is the only life that he need consider; he therefore thrusts himself into the foreground in business, he tramples under his feet all weaker competitors; without considering the justice of the methods which he adopts, without considering the legitimate ways or the illegitimate ways that are presented to him, he selects anything that will advance him in the world; he destroys homes, he undermines business and commerce, he robs those who are less keen of brain and less strong and substantial of will, and so he goes on, leaving behind him in the world a broad track of blasted lives like some great prairie which has been burned over by the heat of the flames. His life is for itself alone, and so he will draw on every side, like some poisonous tree, the nutriment that was intended for other and better shrubs; and so he grows and luxuriates, and the poisonous vapor goes out all around to every other

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form of life. He grows himself, but he grows into a life that is injurious, that is deadly to his higher self, that is deadly to others. The English essayist was right when he said that "a selfish man is one who considers that everybody else is tributary to himself." A friend when he can no longer serve him is like a worn-out garment to be cast one side, reversing the precept of the Apostle, to hold fast that which is good.

You know the selfish man, the man of immoderate self-assertion. He is a brute in the home, and the broken heart of his wife bears testimony to the evil of his life. He is the persecutor of the Church; he is the denier of the rights and the privileges of the poor and the outcast; he lifts himself upon the dead bodies of men in the sight of God as valuable as himself, only asking that his wealth may be larger, that his fame may be more brilliant, that his political career may be more splendid. But, on the other hand, there is the man who is forever denying himself. Immoderate self-denial means an unholy and an evil life, just as certainly as immoderate self-assertion. The world

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has imagined that there is something valuable in the laceration, the mortification of the body; as if this temple that God gave to us is not just as really the work of His hands as the soul within the temple. As a mother's love is better and more eternal than a mother's body, which is the interpreter of the love, the soul is better than the body. But why or how should a soul be in this world if it were not for the body! The body is the temple of the living God, and the living God is our soul; and any man who does not remember the law of life, who does not honor, who does not dignify his body, is just as really a sinner as though he violated the Ten Commandments, or attacked with deadly intent the soul within. This body of ours has been disgraced and degraded by the theology of the past. Men and women have been reduced to maniacs, without patriotism, without love of home, without self-respect, by these false, though honest, beliefs that have been held by men. And so it has been thought that when a man has put out his eyes, when he has stopped his ears to the glory and harmony of the earth, when he has forever looked down

upon the earth until he can see only dust and dirt and nothing of sunlight, nothing of the sky above, such a man is a Christian. A thousand times no! This is immoderate self-denial; it is the denial of growth; it is the crowding out of existence of what is noblest and sweetest in life. No, one way or another, it makes no difference which we adopt, we shall find that both will come to the same thing; immoderate self-assertion and immoderate self-denial both come to the same end—the degradation of all that is noblest in human nature.

What then is the reconciliation between self-assertion and self-denial? Are we to be involved forever in these difficult problems? Is there no answer at all for a man or a woman who wants to live a rational, Christian life, who is perfectly willing to make sacrifices, but does not desire to make sacrifices that are without fruit, who feels in the enthusiasm of youth that there is a call within for great achievement, for enlargement, for increase of power, for the making of wealth, wealth of gold and labor and thought and imagination and of love? Is there no way for these young men and young

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women, and older men and older women? Are we to make our religion so absurd to our intellectual natures that we cannot accept it as men and women and leave it only to those who are weak enough not to think at all? I would not recommend a reconciliation that involves a compromise. A compromise is never a solution. A compromise in politics or in religion is only a temporary bridge built over a chasm that we cannot fill up. What we want is to fill up the chasm and make the way a certain and sure way on towards God and the better life. There must be some higher plane upon which these two principles come together in a reconciliation that shall not be a compromise but the expression of a high law. I may not be able to make my meaning altogether clear, but I think there is such a reconciliation in a higher law, and if I were to adopt one word to express that higher law I would use a word that I may have frequently used before but that seems to me to best represent my morning's thought—selfhood. There is a distinction to be made between selfishness, which is immoderate self-assertion, and selfhood, which is

the highest, completest development of our own nature after the image of the Almighty. But the development of our highest nature rests upon the recognition of our relation to all conditions and all persons. Self-assertion which is so immoderate that it becomes selfishness declares: "I do not care for conditions excepting as conditions may aid me. I care nothing about the rights, the duties, the privileges of other people." It has been said that "self-love when it is immoderate is the forgetfulness of the privileges and the duties of other people. Without self-love, society would be impossible." And it is quite true, because without self-love, without self-assertion that reaches out after larger knowledge and larger action and larger achievement, there can be no wealth, there can be no knowledge, there can be no civilization, and civilization in the long run is only the congregation of so many selfhoods; and the better you can make the individual, the better you will make civilization. Now, if you ignore the individual, if you take away from him all good things and good deeds and good thoughts, if you take away from him



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the discoveries and inventions, the power of making money and creating art and beauty and music, and institutions of education and philanthropy that you have with civilization—if you could take out of civilization all individualism, you would have no civilization at all. Society would go to pieces. And men are feeling this all the time. Business men are right. They say: “Why does my minister say to me every Sunday that I must deny myself and never make any exception at all. Does he not know that all the time I am working during the week, digging the gold out of the mines, bringing the coal from under the earth to the market-place and distributing it in the homes, enlarging enterprise, increasing manufacture, aiding in the accumulation and distribution of wealth—does he not understand that I must serve civilization and serve God?” He ought to understand it but he fails to make himself plain when he condemns this reconciliation of which I speak.

Now selfhood is necessary ; it is the very condition of all life that is worth the having. Did you never stop to think that that great

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picture of *The Judgment* is but Michael Angelo asserted. You go into that little refectory in Milan and you see that marvellous picture of Leonardo Da Vinci, just suggesting itself now, after the ravages of time, and you say: "There is the man himself. If only nature would have let that individuality that has been painted upon the wall last until all men could see it!" Why, what was the Declaration of Independence but Thomas Jefferson expressed! The emancipation of the slaves in the proclamation of Abraham Lincoln was but Lincoln's love of liberty and love of truth and fidelity to duty bodily exhibited. Self-assertion it was. The power of selfhood, but the power of selfhood working along noble lines. And so America is but Christopher Columbus—living, throbbing Christopher Columbus! The locomotive is nothing but Watts and selfhood and individuality and manhood expressed—all the power of thought and love and perseverance wrapped up in those wonderful bits of machinery which change the very face of nature, and alter the destiny of the churches and nations. Is it not true, then,

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that selfhood is demanded of us—that self-assertion within certain limits is absolutely essential? Well, now, what is the limit? All selfhood must be realized under the direction of love, and that love is to be understood and illustrated and illumined by the teaching of the greatest masters and lovers of their kind the world has ever known. Our selfhood reaches its highest expression when our selfhood is directed by love—when love for God and love for our fellows is at the bottom of all our trade, is at the bottom of all our study, our art; and not until love is there, not until we are able to say in the interest of those whom we love: “We will deny ourselves, we will give up something because love says that so we will realize our highest selfhood,” shall we reach that reconciliation of which I speak. Is it not true then that that denial that does not involve any advantage to our fellows is not praiseworthy? Why should I fling my gold and my silver that I have received by inheritance, or that I have made for myself—why should I throw it into the gutter? Shall it do the gutter any good? Shall it do the grass any good? A thousand

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times no! Rather have something of the tenacity for gold that marks the miser than that I should fling my gold and silver broadcast upon the earth without thinking what will be the result of my conduct. But when I see a race dying in slavery, when I see poor, out-cast men and women who could be brought into homes, could be saved, could be educated, could be uplifted by the use of my money and then educated by love and sympathy, I will give generously of my means. Then there is sense in my self-denial; and if it mean that I shall have a horse less, or that I shall give up my establishment—if it mean that I shall dress plainly and simply where I have dressed luxuriously—if my heart says all this is demanded of me, I will give these things all up rationally; not because there is anything good in giving up, but because by giving them up I am going to make the world a great deal better.

We have been told so many times that we are not to laugh, that we are not to rejoice, that we are to go through the world with faces as long as yonder pillar. We have been told that we must have a kind of glare in our eyes and not

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respond to the songs of the birds and the laughter of children; that we must be subdued and sad, that in order to be religious we must be very solemn. Now, if there is anything that is unchristian it is that attitude of mind that would permit a man or woman to go into the presence of suffering and death and turn off a jest and laugh, to go into the home of mourning and repeat the latest *bon mot*. You would not go into the home of sorrow and sit there laughing and thinking about the good things of the week that is to come, when your friends are in the depths of bereavement from the loss of husband, or wife, or children, or beloved. When you are with those who mourn, mourn with them; when you are with those who rejoice, rejoice with them. There is a time to mourn, there is a time to rejoice; there is a time to laugh, and the laugh is just as really approved by the angels as is the moan. And so do you not see how you may give up many things when by giving up those many things you are enriching the lives of a people? You give up your breakfast, your dinner, you give up your midday meal, be-

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cause you are in the wilderness and you are the general, you are the leader, you are made of different stuff than your men, perhaps; and so, like Alexander, you will not eat, you will not drink, and by so doing you take your army out of starvation and out of agony and make them men again. How many times the great leaders in the military world have done this—gone themselves without food, without water, that their comrades might have the drink and food they needed. And when this denial takes place you say: "That is intelligent; it brings about results; it means something; it is manly." But to go through the world a poor, starved maniac, without love of home, without love of country, without any love but the love of these acts of self-mortification that are selfish keys to unlock the door of a selfish heaven—a thousand times no! But when your love gives to you power to sacrifice for the advantage of others, as a mother's love gives her power, as every love in the world has given power, then do you not see how rational it becomes? By giving up thus for some real purpose you make your own selfhood larger, you join the

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company of the martyrs and saints of every faith and every country, you join the forces of those who at the head of nations and at the head of great institutions have shown men how selfhood is sometimes the denial of self, in order that the higher self may be born. That I think is the great result that comes to us in these Lenten days which we are now observing. If I felt that this Lenten period only made us irrational and narrow, I would say, "Let us have nothing of it." But I think we can put new meaning in it.

We are told that a great painter painted a picture in a refectory in Venice. It represented a saint and some monks sitting before the Lord's table with empty plates and with empty flagons; and yet this saint of the Church was thanking God and lifting up his voice in prayer, while all the other monks looked at him in astonishment that he should give thanks for the empty plates and empty flagons. But the artist has shown above the heads of the saint and the monks—angels. They are carrying around spiritual food and stooping to offer it to the saint and to the monks. Is this not

typical of my thought? We empty our plates and our flagons of the bread and the wine, the symbols of Christ's life, his body and his blood, and we give all that we have that is sweetest and noblest, because we know that in God's own good time the spiritual food will come down to us in angels' hands.

I have thought, my friends, during this last week, when the awful cloud of smoke enveloped our homes, when the flames reached angrily up toward the heavens as though in mockery of the providence of God, and men and women and children disappeared in sudden and awful death—I have thought when I have remembered the dull thud of falling walls and the moans of those who were separated all at once from their beloved—I have wondered why it is that this self-assertion of man has not yet learned how to avoid the errors of its improvidence. It was not the providence of God that yonder building should go up in flames; it was not the will of God, in any absolute sense, that those who were wrapped about in shrouds of flame should be taken at once from pain into immortal peace. Its main cause we have yet



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to learn—how to recognize the relation between self-assertion and selfhood. It is because we are content with gain, content with ease, because we are not willing to make sacrifices, that our whole city is full of conditions that will end in disaster and death many times in the experience of the younger members of this congregation. I do not blame individuals. I blame a system which we have not yet learned how to control. And when we have asserted ourselves enough, when we have carried our business to a point where justice and fairness have united with competence and desire for gain, then we shall be willing, whatever our interest and whatever our property, we shall be willing to deny ourselves, to take up the cross of narrower means, in order that our fellows may not be subjected to danger and to death. Time will come, believe me, when it will not be necessary to write across our dangerous buildings the order of the Fire Department, because there will be written across the hearts of the proprietors and the managers of the people this thought: "Until I am ready to deny myself and take up my cross in the name

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of Christ I am not a true man, I am not a true woman, I am not a Christian or a follower of God."

Almighty and All-Merciful God, our Heavenly Father, help us to understand that Thou art within all things and above all things, and though the improvidence of man makes many things go wrong, we know that Thou art still with us and that above all these things that come to us as the result of our wrong-doing or our indifference, Thy love is, Thy love can bring joy at last out of sorrow, and peace out of every pang. And help us to feel, O God, that those who were startled into sudden terror, were confronted with the flames that wrapped them around—help us to understand that in the flames they found Thee, and found Thy love warmer than flame and Thine arms stronger to them than all the help of man. And as we remember the brave deeds performed in the name of love by the humble workmen and protectors of our city, may we be glad of them, glad of their courage, glad there is so much good in every man, and look forward to that time when

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we shall all come together in a world where there shall be no sudden clang and no sudden blast of flame and of death. In Christ's name. Amen.



## X

### ALL SOULS' DAY

You may find the words of my text in the 15th verse of the 3d chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians: "The whole family in heaven and on earth."

WHEN St. Paul wrote these words he was a resident in Rome. Coming as a provincial citizen to the imperial city he was doubtless impressed with the greatness of the empire. His mind was filled with the thought that beginning with a small Italian city Rome had so extended her borders that she had brought all the world into subjection; she had opened the franchise to every citizen in every part of the inhabitable world. The centre of the administration of this great nation was Rome, and the emperor was at once the symbol of authority and the protector and father of his people. So also St. Paul was evidently thinking, when he

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wrote this Epistle, of the words of the great Stoic philosopher Seneca, who described a universal city in which all men—the free and the enslaved, the ignorant and the well-informed—were to be citizens,—a universal city in which the noblest thinking and the purest loving were to be the sentiment binding together all classes of men. What more natural then that St. Paul should think of the brotherhood established by Jesus of Nazareth, of Jerusalem the Golden, whose foundations rested upon the solid earth of the present, but whose minarets and towers were lifted above the clouds, where the sunlight of immortality forever rested! If he thought of a universal empire resting upon military force, what more logical, more inevitable, than that he should think of the reign of universal love and the empire that rests upon the recognition of justice and mercy among men! If he saw the Roman citizens looking into the face of their emperor and little by little making him an object of worship because with wonderful power he commanded all the cohorts of his great army to protect the rights of a Roman citizen anywhere, from the Medi-



terranean to the northernmost limit of Great Britain, was it strange that St. Paul should think of that higher King and Protector and Father of His people, the Infinite and the Invisible God? And so we find St. Paul bringing before us this magnificent spectacle of one great brotherhood, or, as he makes it more personal and intimate in the text which I have given to you this morning, one universal family, the centre of that family being not an earthly parent, but God who created and God who preserves us all. If St. Paul remembered his own father, a man perhaps of intelligence and discipline, of tenderest affection; if he remembered his mother, who loved him into life and who in pain and anguish rejoiced that a man-child was given to the world, in God he saw the union of both the female and the male elements of strength and morality, and in Him the love which transcends all other forms of love. The Apostle saw God Himself, the Father Omnipotent, whose praises we sing when we worship together in this consecrated church, and whose law we seek to obey while we worship Him upon the street and in the

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places of pleasure and of traffic. Is there anything after all that more appeals to the imagination of a weakened manhood and womanhood than this same idea of family and home? We hear of the altar, and our minds are filled with awe; we recall the bloody sacrifices from the time when men were offered as gifts to God to the time when the beasts of the field served in this way; we remember the awful creeds that have been developed in the efforts which men have made to find out something of God and destiny; we recall the sadness, the solitude of the tomb, and we remember how the world has been groaning in great travail ever since the beginning to find out whether or no there be an immortal state beyond what we call—incorrectly—a mortal state. And when the Apostle decides that all these great questions of time and of eternity are narrowed down to this consideration, that we are all the sons and daughters of a universal Father, that we are all members of one family, and that whatever our condition, whatever our possessions or lack of possessions, we are rich in the possession of one central authority who is Infinite Compas-

sion and Infinite Tenderness; then, I say, all these questions take upon themselves a new phase, and what light comes into the darkened chambers of our hearts, and how sweet the communion of saints becomes, because we know that there is one family, that there is only a fragment of it upon earth, that the whole family is in heaven and on the earth! It is utterly impossible for us to worship in the right spirit until we understand that we are surrounded by a multitude vastly larger than any multitude that ever came together in any cathedral or in any church in any land.

You sometimes enter some great place where men are cared for as they travel from town to town, from city to city, or from continent to continent, and you are impressed with the lavish expenditure of wealth to care for these migratory men and women; and as you sit, perhaps, in the drawing-room of such a place and see all sorts and conditions of men represented, with the strange garb of the East, or the modern fashion of the West, with the color of the torrid zone, or with the pallor of the temperate zone, men distinguished in statecraft,



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men known in the world of science, men who are developing great enterprises for the advantage of themselves and the world — as you see all this variety of life, all these various forms of civilization and of individual experiences represented, if you are thoughtful the first thing is a kind of mental vision: How is it possible that all these classes, or this large number of representatives of classes, can be cared for even in this great place, where everything that genius in architecture and wisdom in administration can offer has been brought to bear! And when you take a deeper thought about the mental and moral and religious differences of these people, all shooting off in tangents of their own into the unknown, the problem becomes the harder. And when you see, perhaps, in the costume which distinguishes them from civic life, military leaders and commanders, brilliant in distinction of their mien, men who bear the impress upon themselves of long struggle in battle-fields for national ideas, for subjection of other races and the enlargement either of glory or of legitimate power among nations, you find all the world standing



watching one another, you hear the clash of arms, you see the death that comes from all these varieties of interests and influences. The confusion would become even greater, perhaps, if one were to tell you of a universal fatherhood and universal brotherhood and universal salvation. In other words, if some one were to tell you of the universal Church that seeks to bring men together in a citizenship that has its deepest roots in heaven, you would become even more entangled in the coils of your thought. But if out of all this variety of thought and life could come the unity of the home thought and the home centre—if you could only remember that as you stand at the circle of your own family life and see the great differences of physical appearance and intellectual and moral life which are represented in any large family, and perceive how the love of the mother and the judgment and the tenderness of the father bring together all this variety and make them solid in one great power for good, in one holy memory of the past, and in one glorious anticipation of the future, then somehow you get at the centre of the Christian


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thought, you place yourself just where Saint Paul placed himself when he spoke of "the whole family in heaven and on the earth." In other words, when we get at the very centre of our text we discover that the word "family" embodies not only the thought but the very expression of paternity. They who are of this family are one in the possession of the same Father. So that this thought comes to us on this All Souls' day, that Christianity, rearing itself upon the family idea, reaches out, enlarging its circles from the family circle to the circle of the city, the state, the nation, and at last to the very limit of all the earth. We are all sons and daughters, we are told, of the living God. There is one unified power in the universe—that is the power of the Infinite Father, or the recognition, to put it in different phrase, of the practical force of Universal Fatherhood. If men could only understand this, how different would the human life be, how different would national elements be, how strangely unlike the present Christendom would the Christendom resting upon such a foundation be! It has been because we have failed to



recognize that there is such a thing as a universal religion, because we have failed to recognize that there is such a thing as a universal fatherhood, a universal brotherhood, a universal salvation, that we have been ranged in hostile courts and that Church unity, so far as that is possible, has as yet been an unrealized dream.

I ask you, starting from this central thought, to consider one other important truth, that it may be to you an inspiration on this day of memorial. Remember that the religion of Jesus Christ is an all-comprehensive religion. It is impossible for us to rejoice on All Saints' day, or on All Souls' day, if we believe that the religion of the Gospel is for a favored few. If we believe that somewhere in the bowels of the earth, or in some place which we cannot measure even through imagination or locate through judgment—if we believe that a portion of the great family, united under the one common Father, is forever resting in darkness and in wickedness and in immorality—if we believe that within the hells—if we choose to call them such—of this world and the world to




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come there is no reformatory power, no uplifting power—if we believe that God somehow will be caught in the threads which He has been weaving upon the loom of destiny, and will Himself be incompetent by the power of love to save some portions of the race in the time that is to be, then it seems to me that one half the glory of our celebration of the days that are gone, of the men and women that are gone, has been taken away from us. Doubtless when we pass through the open door we shall be surprised to find how narrow the line that separates life from death, the present from the future. Doubtless when our eyes are opened we shall be surprised that we did not see more evidences of the work of those who have been dead and are alive again in our homes, in our hearts, and in the world. Probably when we come into that future life we shall say: “How could we have been so deaf! Why, that dear old world in which we lived was a part of the Father’s house of many mansions; and while I was living down in the lower stories, close to the earth, why could not I have listened once in a while and heard the voices of those mov-



ing about in the upper chambers, in the same house of many rooms, in those upper stories that are above disappointment and change and cloud and darkness! Why was it that I could not hear those footfalls? Why could I not have seen them coming in in the old way and sitting down in the old places and occupying chairs at the feasts when we rejoiced? "

It is not strange, perhaps, that there are clouds rising from the grave; it is not strange, perhaps, that our eyes are darkened by the tears of affliction! God knows it is not always possible for us to be brave! God knows how we have struggled sometimes to command the manhood, or the womanhood, in us and to trust the Infinite Father! Sometimes the heavens do appear to open and a vision comes to us, and we are content to wait, knowing that the great lives, that the simple lives, that the tender lives that have been passed with us, and that the saints, the men and women with their faults and yet saintly men and women, who have walked in and out before us in the days that are gone, sometimes are with us again. They are with us now, believe me,



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men and women; they rejoice with us, they sing the chants we sing, they are filled with great loves and great tendernesses for us. It is only a little way to climb up into those upper chambers. The doors swing very easily. Heaven is close to earth. Jerusalem the Golden, with its feast of triumph and its glad voice, is just beyond the threshold of yonder door. Aye, it is at the very entrance to this chancel and this temple which we have loved to believe will disappear before the greater majesty and the greater beauty of the "temple not made with hands." Oh, to think that after a time we shall all sing the song of joy! Oh, to think that after the weary battle and the long march and the awful hours of pain and death, away from home, away from family, we shall all be joined together in the great family over which as father and mother God presides!

How poor are words, how imperfect even imagination's work when we seek to bring what is central in the Gospel to the hearts of men and women! We would not longer argue for immortality if we only experienced it in our hearts. We would not longer seek for miracu-

lous manifestations in physical form of the spirits of our beloved, but we would commune with them every day and every hour. We would work with them; we would wait with them. We would not be sad, we would rejoice in their presence always. We would not ask whether man is mortal or not; we would cut mortality out of our thought and out of our spiritual acceptance and leave only the word "immortality," for that alone characterizes anything that God has made.

Standing then with the ancient writer, the Apostle Saint Paul, in the midst of the prison of the flesh, as he stood in the prison of the flesh and in the Roman dungeon, looking out through the narrow opening which is all we have been able to make for ourselves as yet, we see the horizon widen; and as we lift ourselves into higher communion, the line of the horizon, as we are ascending the mountain, rolls itself still farther into the distance. Starting in the early morning, we were but children then. Other comrades started with us up the slopes, up the mountain. We lost them long ago. The rivers, the lakes, the sea stretch



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between us; and they speak almost another language now, and perhaps we do not hear their voices at all. They have gone on to the right and to the left, away from our childhood, away from the comrades of the past, away from the things that have moulded and transformed us. It may seem to us now, when we are old, as though we were all alone on the great mountain, with only the darkness and the sighing of the wind in the dead branches of the trees. Oh, the weariness of the long path! we say sometimes. Oh, the loneliness! But the Bible comes to us just then; Christ comes to us by the lips of his Apostle, and we hear the words: "Only one family after all! Only one home after all!" We have loved the earthly home, but all our faces are set towards the heavenly home. And after a little time, by many different paths, by many different ways, out of the clouds, out of the loneliness, out of the weariness of the lost path, the whole of the family—all those whom we have known and honored and loved and mourned for perhaps—all will come together on the summit, where there is perpetual light above the clouds. Aye, in the

upper rooms of that Father's universal home, where at last we shall learn that though we were prodigals we were yet all the sons of God, where we shall learn at last what we can only dream about now—that the whole human race, and every individual in that great race, is loved of God and cared for by God as a mother cares for her children, as a father pitieth his own, only with an infinite care, an infinite compassion.

Go forth from the service of All Souls' day to-day confident that they whom you love go with you; that they will always be with you; that they will lead you up and on, over those rugged places where your feet are sometimes torn and bleeding; and at last you and they and all men together shall sing to God: Halleluiah! Halleluiah! To God Omnipotent, the Father of us all, who has saved us by His cross!

All-Mighty and All-Loving God, our Heavenly Father, help us to learn the lessons Thou art teaching us day by day, and even if sometimes the lines are very hard, if sometimes the

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way we are called upon to go is full of obstacles and full of heavy crosses which we must meet and carry, wilt Thou make Thy presence so well known to us that we shall rest like tired children on Thy bosom, knowing that Thou doest all things well. In Christ's name. Amen.

## XI

### A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

O THOU God of light and love, filling the earth and the heavens with Thy glory, coming to our human hearts in the simple words and works of daily life revealed in all Thy majesty and mercy in the Child of Bethlehem, visit us as we bow before Thee, that our hearts may be filled with Thy blessing and Thy inspiration, that are above the blessing and the inspiration of the world, that our hearts may be purified and sanctified, that they may become the cradle of lofty emotions and everlasting growth in divine life; and so by Thy strength give unto our weak and human wills that all our days may be spent in Thy knowledge and be filled with hope and with delight which passeth description.

We confess before Thee, our Father, our many transgressions. We have closed the door to the messengers of Thy truth and Thy

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light, and we have permitted our feet to wander in paths that turn from Thee and from Thy law; and yet, O God, Thou hast been with us sometimes in our conscious realization of Thy presence, Thou hast touched our thought with the light that is from above, Thou hast quickened our loves and so buttressed our wills that we have worked for Thee and for our fellows in the world. Grant unto us that in all the walks by which we reach after Thee in the darkness of life we may find Thee. Give us to understand that Thou art forever revealing Thyself unto the world; and may we listen to the words of wise prophets and teachers of every country and of every time, that we may enjoy something of that deep undertone of harmony, that light and that love revealed in the words, in the precepts, and in the commandments, which have been sounding in the deep chambers of men's hearts from the beginning. But while we thank Thee, O God, for all the gifts of this present life, for every daily joy, for all the sweetness and beauty of home life and love, for all the patience and all the kindness of parents, and all the sympathy,

faith, and love of children, while we remember Thee in all the institutions of education and liberty which Thou hast given unto us, may we remember especially how Thou hast made Thyself known unto us in Bethlehem of Judea, in the Gospel which fell from the lips of the Child of the manger, in the example, in the character of One who has o'er-topped all other teachers and made known to us the meaning of life and the meaning of eternity. Grant unto us as we worship before Thee that His spirit may become a practical force in our lives. Help us to perform all our duties in the home, in the walks of men, in the church, in the government, as those who are the admirers and the imitators of the Prince of Peace. May we understand that kingdom of life and of love revealed by Him as the kingdom of good-will towards all men; and may we strive in all the operations of affection, in all the endeavors and the methods of our personal life, in all the worship and work of the church, to exhibit the spirit and live the life which was given unto us in Jesus of Nazareth.

Our prayers are offered this morning, our

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Father, for all those who are lonely in these Christmas days, for all those whose faith has been shaken as they have seen those who were dear and noble, those who were great and Christian, those who were little and full of hopes of divine life, snatched away from them and they have been left to go alone along the shadowed path of life. As we receive the many gifts that are bestowed upon us by Thy hand and by the hands of our friends and our beloved, as we rejoice in the possession of all those that make our family circle complete, may we remember others whose hearts are sad to-day and whose homes have vacant places and vacant chairs within them. O Father, help us to understand that there is a supreme gift, the gift of immortality; and on this Advent day may the gates of the immortal world swing open before us that we may see our beloved in spiritual vision within the arms that are never weary and upon the bosom that is filled with more than a mother's love. So, our Father, wilt Thou help all those who are in any way troubled, in body, mind, or estate. Strengthen the weak, give faith to those who

## A Christmas Prayer 191

are faithless, give the vision of eternal life unto those who are without it; and so, by Thy holy spirit direct us and mould us every one, whether we are here at this altar or absent from it, that we may know Thee, from the least unto the greatest, and serve Thee in that abiding peace which came unto the Apostles in the olden times and that is promised unto us, if we but follow the footsteps of our common Saviour, the Universal Redeemer, in whose name we pray Thee. Amen.



## XII

### A CHRISTMAS SERMON

You may find the words of my text in the 14th verse of the 1st chapter of the Gospel according to St. John: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory."

CHRISTMAS stands not alone for a sentiment, but for a fact. Whoever the author of the Fourth Gospel may have been, his mind was full, as a German critic has said, with the child-like Christmas joy. There can be no doubt that the author of what we call St. John's Gospel, and every other Apostle, affirms the doctrine of the Incarnation, or the dwelling of the divine in the human. But while every church and every individual Christian believes in the Incarnation, there has been much misinterpretation of the central fact of Christendom and of the day which we celebrate. So strangely

misconceived has it been that it has been removed from the apprehension of men and relegated to a religion of doubt and of pure mysticism. One tendency has been to make the incarnation of Christ an exceptional and miraculous incarnation. It has been asserted by those who have fashioned the legends of the Church that, when the little Child opened his eyes upon life in the manger at Bethlehem, the poles of the earth stood still, the planets were arrested in their courses, all processes of growth in nature were brought to a standstill, and the oxen in the stalls bowed down like human beings and worshipped the Child Jesus. It has been asserted in dogmatic phrase, that only on that Christmas day so long ago has God incarnated Himself in man, and that all the circumstances which preceded and which succeeded the birth in Judea were absolutely without parallel in the history of human lives. You are acquainted with this assertion that declares that God at one time in the history of mankind came down into the events of the councils of humanity and made His will known. You are acquainted with the decrees and the dogmas of

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the churches of every name who have undertaken so to glorify the character and the work of Jesus that they have made them both utterly unintelligible. There is something of childhood's simplicity in our secular celebration of Christmas day. There is something that is altogether human in our greetings when the morning sun appears upon this interesting day, and in all our attempt at home we strive to bring our thought and our imagination to the level of the child thought and the child imagination. We forget for a time all our philosophies, all our theologies, all the wear and tear of life, and we strive to be as simple as the little child, who has not yet met the difficulties and experienced something of the sorrow and the mystery of this great universe of ours. But when we appear before the altar, when we unite in the services of the Church, we think that it is necessary to throw a veil of mysticism over the great event which we are celebrating at this hour. We imagine that unless the coming of Jesus is in every way entirely unlike the coming of any other human soul, unless we attribute to him in his nature or in his work

something that is altogether beyond the realm of law, we have not done him the honor which is due him. I can well understand how in the progress of the ages so wonderful a nature as the Master's, such exceptional ability to mould men after higher moral standards and ideals—how the wonderful spirituality of this son of God should have compelled on the part of all absolute adoration; and I will not separate myself to-day—I would not have you separate yourselves—from those who most sincerely and most completely adore the divine in Jesus of Nazareth. But because men have thus confronted a difficult problem which seemed to them sometimes absolutely unintelligible, because they have been asked to accept a fact which has no parallel anywhere else in the normal experience of the human race, because Jesus has been removed from the level of the human and made a part of the transcendent deity, men have hesitated about becoming followers of his, they have felt that they could not rightly join in these services of commemoration and of gladness on Christmas day. In the effort to establish the fact as an exceptional

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and a miraculous fact, men have relegated Jesus to the unreal fields and the distant thrones of the Godhead itself, or have declared that we can know nothing whatever of God because God is able only to reveal Himself to a divine nature like His own, so that no miracle, so that no event, so that no Gospel of any kind can make known to us the unknown and the unknowable God. If this view of the fact and the event of Christmas has made religion less practical, less operative among men, is there not some way in which we may enter into the joy of these days and find the real power of the advent of the Master? Is there not some intellectual way of examining this great birth at Bethlehem that shall bring it into order and into line with other great events in the history of the world and so make our larger interpretation of life a more satisfactory and a more helpful one? I think there is such a view of the Incarnation, and if I read the New Testament aright it is the view of the Incarnation that is announced by the writer of our text and by the Master himself. In other words, the Incarnation which we celebrate to-

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day and all Christmas days is not an exceptional and miraculous Incarnation, but is a normal and a universal Incarnation.

To illustrate my meaning. Let me refer to the worship of the East, where certain devotees on a certain day of the year come together in a church that is without windows of any kind, and there in a narrow room, filled with foul air, without any suggestion of the beauty of nature or the light of heaven, they wait, hour after hour, until the sun has reached a certain place in the heavens. Then a solitary ray of light comes through the only crevice in the great black wall, down to their quivering bodies and their saddened hearts. What wonder that under these conditions they break forth into songs of praise and rejoice in gladsome chants that a single ray of light has come from God's heaven into their poisonous chamber where they are following an unholy worship! But if these devotees were only broad-minded enough they would know that all the time they have been waiting within these walls the whole universe has been full of light. At some time in the twenty-four hours of the day, all parts of the world are


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illuminated with God's light, that is completely normal, that is universal. All they had to do at any moment was to throw open the door of their monastery and rush out into the light of heaven; and this light filled not only the hut of the peasant but the palace of the king, not only illumined with glory the throne of the monarch but filled the very cradle of the farmer and the vineyard keeper with the same light. Do you not see the application of the illustration? God is forever incarnating Himself. God is everywhere—under all forms of faith, in every church, in every age God is manifesting Himself to His children. As a celebrated philosopher said, "God were not God at all if He were not revealing Himself." The mother is not a mother at all except as she is showing in a myriad ways the maternal love. A husband and a wife are not husband and wife at all except as they reveal affection for one another. Forever reincarnating itself is the spirit of God. As the ocean sends up its golden mists to be taken up in the clouds and then fall again upon all the surface of the earth, to spring up in the blade and the stalk of the



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flower and the corn, so the mighty spirit of God, forever deep beyond the fathoming power of man, forever high beyond his vision, this God is forever sending Himself out over all the earth, re-forming Himself in every flower, in every bit of green that decorates our churches on these days, forever exhibiting Himself in every form of beauty—in mountain, in stream, in frosted work on windows, in high-piled ice in northern climes. God, in other words, if He be God at all, must be forever giving Himself to the world. And if ye know not God it is because ye know not yourselves; for wherever you go you carry God with you. The reason you and I do not find God born into our hearts every day in the year, wherever we are and whatever we are doing, is because we have not yet come to self-realization. We could not live an hour if Christmas days were not all days. We could not live a moment if the love and power, the majesty and mercy of God were not forever incarnating themselves in the lives of men and women. I am sure that we undervalue the dignity of life. I like to think of Jesus as the spirit of the Almighty God that





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was before Abraham, the spirit of the Almighty poured out upon all men. I like to think of this spirit, the Christ spirit that was revealed in the man Jesus, as entering into every significant and normal act of our lives. How trade would be elevated if only we realized God in trade! How pleasure would be dignified if only we could find under the splendid show of pleasure the living heart of the Almighty! How the very dust of the street would grow golden if we could only see that in some sense the very dust itself is a part of the glorious raiment of the spirit of God!

You observe, then, that the great thought to which I would ask your attention this morning, as the very heart of the Advent season, as the very ground of the Christmas celebration, is that God is forever incarnating Himself; that the doctrine of the Incarnation held by the churches of every faith, orthodox or liberal, is not an exceptional or a miraculous incarnation necessarily, but it is a normal and a universal Incarnation. The world has entangled itself in discussion of the Trinity. The world has imagined that it has clarified its vision of



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the doctrine of the Unity; and yet I submit to you that the Trinity and the Unity of the Godhead as declared by the schools have fallen far short of the doctrine which we celebrate to-day, which is the doctrine of the New Testament.

On one occasion in this city a well-known Presbyterian minister gave up his church affiliations because he could no longer hold to the doctrine of the Trinity. Dr. Bellows, an equally celebrated Unitarian minister of this town, met this minister upon the street one day, and saluting him he said: "I hear you are no longer a member of the Presbyterian Church." "No, I could not accept the doctrine of the Trinity." Whereupon Dr. Bellows, the Unitarian theologian, replied: "I am sorry you are no longer a Trinitarian, because I am a Trinitarian." James Freeman Clarke, one of the most celebrated preachers of the Unitarian faith in the city of Boston, once declared: "The dogma of the Trinity is the most false doctrine in the world in *form*, but the truest doctrine in *substance*." Dr. Hedge, one of the extreme radical theologians of the Unitarian Church and for many years a professor at Harvard University,

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said, in speaking of the Trinitarian discussion, that when the early Church, after the long conflict with the earnest Unitarians of that day, vindicated the doctrine of the Trinity—that is, the doctrine that God and the Son Jesus were of like substance, they won the greatest battle for Christian truth a church has ever known. And yet you will say the Trinitarians and the Unitarians stand in theological array, fighting one another to the death. Well, they do. Why? Because the Trinitarians and the Unitarians—including in the latter class the Universalists, so far as the doctrine of the Unity of the God-head is concerned,—the Trinitarians and the Unitarians who are simply dogmatists have not yet learned the central fact of the great day that is commemorated in the Gospel and which we are celebrating to-day. In other words, there is a point of agreement between the Trinitarians and the Unitarians which is found in the principle which I have announced imperfectly this morning—that the Incarnation of God is normal and universal. So, then, when a Trinitarian asks me, “Are you a Trinitarian?” I reply: “What do you mean? Do

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you mean that God has revealed Himself in three important ways that are more important than any other ways? And do you mean that this is only a part of the universal Incarnation, the universal revelation?" Then I say, "I am a Trinitarian." But if you ask me, "Do you believe as a Trinitarian that God has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and in no other way, and only once in the history of the world?" Then I say: "I am not a Trinitarian. I am not a dogmatist of that kind. I am a Unitarian so far as I believe that God is one God and that His revelation is a universal and a normal revelation of His spirit." If, on the other hand, you ask me, "Are you a Unitarian?" If you mean by that that God never has revealed Himself and that He is an unknown God, then I say, "I am not a Unitarian." But only the extreme dogmatists on the one side or the other take such a view as I have defined as belonging to the one or to the other. . . .

God then in the idea of His incarnation first of all is the transcendent God — first, He is the Creator of all things. Even the agnostic

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philosophers will affirm that there is an eternal energy from which all things proceed—that is the transcendent God, that is the Father, that is the Creator. But certainly if God reveal Himself in no other way we can understand but little of His method and of His spirit. In order that we may know more of this unknown God, in order that we may not build altars to the unknown God as the Greeks did centuries ago, in order that we may not waste our lives in the dry fields of agnosticism, God says: “I will incarnate Myself in a human form. That human form shall not by any means measure and limit My divinity—that human form shall not in any sense be the whole of God, but there shall be something of the divine in that human child of Mine. I have been giving something of Myself from the beginning—I have been incarnating Myself in all nations of the earth and in all individuals of the earth, otherwise there could be no individuals and there could be no nations. Without this normal, universal incarnation of the divine spirit in human forms there could be no earth, there could be no humanity, there could be no moral-

ity there could be no religion. But I desire to make My will known to men as men have not yet known it. I will incarnate Myself, I will exhibit My Christ spirit, that is one with Me, that was long before the time of Abraham, and long before the time of Adam and Eve, and long before the cosmos itself. I will let more of this Christ spirit enter into the heart of Jesus than has entered into the heart of man, and I will give so much of Myself in justice, in mercy and love, that all the world must needs admire and all the world some day imitate Myself revealed in my Son Jesus of Nazareth." So that we find God always and everywhere incarnating Himself every Christmas day anew for us, incarnating Himself in all young loves, in all old loves, in all philosophers, in all reformers, in all great statesmen, in all great saviours of their kind, but coming to the highest known expression in Jesus, the reformer, the great Saviour of mankind.

And then beyond this there is another method of the divine ordination—that is the Holy Spirit, as we call it, which is God universally touching the individual intellect and

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the individual conscience. Jesus said: "It is expedient that I go away, because while I am with you your thought is centred upon me. Your vision goes no farther than my personality that has been worked out amongst you. When I am gone, the Holy Spirit, God universally present in the world, will come into your conscience and convict you of sin. It will bring you light, it will bring you comfort, it will reveal all truth to you by the narrow way of righteousness, in which I have walked and in which you must also walk." So that here is God revealing Himself in individual consciences, in the individual understanding, in individual imagination and faith. Here is then the kind of Trinity—not the dogmatist's Trinity, by any means, but the Trinity of manifestation in which Jesus himself believed. God always the one God, God always the unit God, not that mathematical absurdity that the Church has held to, but God revealing Himself pre-eminently, more completely, in these three clear ways: God the transcendent, God the Father: God revealing Himself in the Son, God Emmanuel, as He is called in the Old Testa-

ment; and then God everywhere in the world, in the individual conscience—God in these three methods of manifestation covering all that is essential in the idea of Incarnation. Cannot you by applying, as I have not time to do this morning, this principle to your daily thought find your way out of some of the mysteries and some of the difficulties that have confronted you? God, always one God above all and in all, revealing Himself in natural life. God revealing Himself by the eloquence and the enthusiasm of every great preacher of morality, God revealed in every great teacher, God re-born in every little child that is born out of the arms of infinite love that He may give us of His own love in its noblest and sweetest expression. It is no isolated fact of which we speak to-day, that was born once for all in Bethlehem in the human Christ. He may be born to-day in your heart and my heart, if we are only ready for it. When sorrow comes to us we think God is afar off, we do not feel the pressure of the Everlasting Arms around us. We can see God in the eyes of the living child: in the eyes of the living husband we see God



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revealed, but in the peaceful eyes of the dead husband we see there only the fathomless depth of the grave and the loss of everything that is dear to us and helpful to us. Oh, men and women, we have not yet been born, we have not yet had God born in us, if we do not see even in the dark shadows the revelation of the Lord—until we have learned that everything is somehow God, that everything at last is overruled by God for good! Oh, listen! God speaks, not I. He speaks in your heart. Oh, hear Him and I will be silent; for when He speaks on Christmas day it is to tell us that even in the grave and in hell He is. Is your heart a grave? Is your heart a hell to-day? God is there. Come to self-realization and you will meet God face to face, and on your knees thank Him that one human being, at least, at one time in the world came to complete self-realization and so became completely divine. Cradle in your hearts your universal faiths. They will grow. God is in them. Strangle your sin, that realizing Jesus you may become more divine, and you shall be able to sing with the angels, Glory to God in the

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highest and on earth! for He is on the earth as much as in the highest heavens. Then every day the business and pleasure as well as psalm and worship shall be God revealed to you; and every man and woman, high or low, rich or poor, good or bad, sinner or saint—every one will look out from behind the bars of the body as sons and daughters of the living God, waiting to be born.

Almighty and All-Merciful God, help us to be born, that we may live indeed—live in Thy spirit, knowing that Thou art within us, that Thou art striving more and more to incarnate Thyself in us; and so as the new year shall come to us may we find that on this Christmas day we have been born in the manger of humility, in the manger of adoration and of love, and during all the coming days that are before us live more Christlike lives, because at last we have found Thee, and in finding Thee have found strength and comfort. In Christ's name. Amen.

### XIII

#### AN EASTER SERMON

You may find the words of my text in the 49th verse of the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

THE belief in immortality is practically universal. In all periods of thought and among all people there has been the up-looking towards an everlasting life. The Oriental seer and the Western conqueror are at one in visions and dreams of immortal existence. Christianity has no monopoly of the hopeful conception. Jesus of Nazareth did not confer the gift of everlasting life upon the children of men. It was the original heritage from the hands and the heart of the Infinite Father of the human race, of whose nature and spirit we partake, long before Jesus walked the ways of Palestine,

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suffered and died upon Calvary and broke the stone barriers of the newly made sepulchre and was living in the thought of eternal life. What then is the contribution of Christianity and of Christ to the solution of the enigma of the ages? What is the significance of this day upon which we have gathered to fill, and more than fill, this church of God? What is the Christian idea of Immortality, for in the idea which has been declared and illustrated, not in the fact of immortality, are we to find the meaning of the day which brings us together? And it is evident, first of all, that the Christian idea of immortality involves the element of certainty. There is nothing that terrifies and disquiets the human heart so much as to imagine, either in the presence of death or on a glorious and sunny day like this, that we are worshipping an image of our own hearts; that when we think of immortality and our beloved living forever in ever-gathering strength and ever-gathering love, we are only projecting our own wishes upon the easily impressed imagination. It is not difficult for those who are imaginative by nature to rear cloudy cities

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of crystal and jasper and sapphire, and to see the golden reed of the angel who measures the city, even as the writer of the Apocalypse and the modern revelators invariably have seen them; but it is quite another thing to know, deep down in our own hearts, that they are not mere clouds, that they are not mere cities without foundation, that shall be dissipated like the golden mist of the morning. And that is what Christianity has succeeded in doing for large multitudes of the children of men.

I do not mean to say that Christianity has offered an argument for immortality that no one can contravene, even in the slightest particular. I do not mean to say that Christianity has so unlocked the doors of heaven that our dear ones can come down to us in bodily form and tell us that it is well with them. But I do say that it is the phenomenon of the soul, the phenomenon of all thought and all philosophy and religion that during these nearly nineteen centuries the world has had a certainty of immortality such as it never had until Jesus rose from the dead. I care not

how you may explain that resurrection. You may say it is a resurrection of the body, and I shall not be able to agree with you; you may say that it is a physical up-coming, and say that all of us have the physical proof of the physical fact, and I cannot understand your position; or you may say that it is a spiritual resurrection—the coming forth from the bonds of flesh of the essential Christ, the Christ that looked through the windows of the body, the Christ that moved through the extremities of the feet and the hands, the Christ who spoke words by his lips and did deeds by his strength of body and of knowledge that the world in all parts has honored unto this day, and I understand you. But whether you accept the one interpretation or the other is perhaps for the moment unimportant. Something happened between the time of his crucifixion on Calvary and Sunday that changed the whole current of thought in the minds of the Apostles and the women who looked upon him in sorrow. They were filled with despair, they thought the end had come—no more communion with him, no more looking out of those grand eyes until

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their souls burned within them, no words of God, no words of humanity such as the world had never heard before, no touching of the hand that had allayed the restlessness of their hearts so many times and led them up the slopes that go from the darkness of absolute despair to the brilliancy of perfect faith. Something, I say, had occurred, and I cannot understand how the world, how the judgment, how the sense of soul that the world possesses in its great and lofty men and women could have so stultified themselves, could have so far gone wrong as to be thinking only of some image of the grave, some phantom of the hours of poetic thinking and no real fact, but only the form of fact without the substance behind it. And so I rejoice with others in all churches who accept the many creeds and many interpretations of the resurrection of Jesus on this Easter day, in the great thought that something that was real occurred, and that we are not befogging our understandings, that we are not going wrong when we come together in the midst of the flowers and the palms, and under the shadow of the old faces and in the presence of

the memorials all around us, reared in the last year, for those whose faces are so distinct to our memories at the present time. It is the certainty of immortality that this day stands for, but it stands for something more than this—it stands for the reality or the substantial character of the future life.

The great English historian was right when he said that one of the causes of the growth, the most remarkable growth, as he declares, of Christianity in the early days was this complete certainty of immortality. But there was something that the historian did not quite grasp, that was the reality of the future life. The Greeks and the Romans and other ancients looked upon the future life as a life of shadowy existence. You will recall how Achilles goes to the underworld and he sees for a moment the form of his loving friend upon the earth, and he reaches out his hands to grasp him in his arms and to feel him and to know it is the same old heart beating under the same heroic and rugged breast; but as he reaches out his hands the shadow disappears and Achilles says, with a great sorrow in his voice: "There is no

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substance here. There are only images and shadows. My friend is but a shadow." And you will recall how Homer in all his accounts of that subterranean world, where the souls of men go upon death, represents the real man as being the prey of birds and beasts, and after the body of the man is destroyed there is left only a vague image which goes down to be a shadow forever among the other shadows of Hades. You will recall, also, how Ulysses says that the life of a drudge on earth, the mere servant on earth, is far better than the life of the greatest king among the shades; and I think that there have been others who have held the same view of immortality.

There is a sweet legend, full of the poetic grace of the Middle Ages, which declares that all the roses have seeds that are sown upon the death of the roses and of the lilies as well, and that after a time these seeds spring up out of the cold earth, the sepulchre of nature, and then we see a long procession of roses and lilies, moving on with beauty and fragrance. But, says the legend, they are unreal, they are shadows, they are but the apparitions of the roses and the

lilies; and they live but for a moment, and as you look at them they return to ashes, and never rise again from the dead. So I have thought, my friends, sometimes, so you and I have thought about that other life. There are those to-day who can see the poetic grace of this Easter day, who can see all the glory and feel the human gladness in the spring months, for all the world, Pagan and Jewish as well as Christian, recognize and celebrate it appropriately. But to them death is the end of all, excepting those roses and lilies, those apparitions of the past, the memories of our beloved. And after our day of life is over even these apparitions disappear as these roses and go down to endless forgetfulness, absolute death. No, Christianity says to us: The future life is more real than this life. Did you ever stop to think that the real things about your friends are not the wealth they may have inherited, the houses in which they live, the power to make possible beauty or something of beauty for us? These are not the great things, though they are great in their place. The great thing in your friend, in my friend, in your beloved,

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in my beloved, is that subtle something within, the soul greater than the body, mightier than all the discouragements, more tremendous in energy than all the muscular force the world has had from the beginning, though it were joined in a power that seemed from the physical standpoint irresistible. It is the voice that is silent that carries farthest; it is the face that is transfigured and spiritualized by self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness that lives and burns before us forever as a moral beacon. I have been told—I never saw him but once—that yonder man (Dr. Chapin's medallion) was not great in figure, was not handsome in face, was somewhat rough in physical exterior; but somehow he was able to place the signet of his manhood upon many a soul, and his words are sounding in this church, as they used to sound for us on Easter days in the old church, making us robust, making us masculine, making us womanly and tender—the message of Almighty God and the angels. It is not beauty of face or of body; it is the soul within the body. I have seen the most beautiful women I have ever seen on this earth in the forms of hunchbacks, with ugly

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and gnarled faces. I have touched the noblest and sweetest men I have ever seen, dressed in rags, unrecognized by the world,—the rags that were placed upon the body by a generous service to others. So that we know it is something within the child, within the man, within the woman that is the real man and the real woman and the real child.

Christianity tells us that immortality, the passage from what we call life through death into life again, is only the unrobing of our real selves. I think that man was right who said: Do not think for a moment—(these are not his words but his idea)—do not think for a moment that when you die you lay aside this physical body and then go searching through God's universe for some other body in which you are to be incased. You have that body now inside you; that real self is in the body; that is the heavenly body, and death only takes off the drapery. Imperfect though the illustration is, it is like taking some work of a great master which has been carved in marble until in spite of its coldness it seems to burn with the warmth of

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genius, and then suddenly, on a sunny day like this, taking off the covering that is upon it and letting it stand out before men in the real statue. The imperfect lines you saw before were but the suggestion of the great thought of the artist, but you did not see the real thing when the covering was on. We may laugh with glee, we may sing our chants, for death is not terrible; it is a blessed message from Almighty God; it takes these poor coverings off, and it makes us to be seen and to see as we are seen. So that we must think as a part of our joy on this day that immortality means real life, real existence; and as we have powers of body to see and hear, the use of hands and feet for running on errands of mercy and lifting the burdens of life, so in that after-existence we shall have powers still, powers of seeing and hearing, powers of touch, keener and stronger and more useful than they have ever been here,—our real selves emerging out of the tomb, getting away from the grave, away from the pain, the disquiet, from everything, but our real selves that have been baptized in the love of God and in the fountain of immortal life.

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And last of all, let me say that on this Easter morning we have a third idea of Christianity to comfort and inspire us; and that is the idea of communion. I think to most men and women death means the closing and the barring of the doors of communion. They say: "I could understand while they were with me how much they loved me; I could understand how much they were in knowledge and grace of character, but somehow the memory of them does not feed my soul—it does not inspire me. The world is a weary and a lonely world now. I am walking all alone and they are afar off. I think they must exist, because I cannot think of anything so absurd as a God creating humanity and then letting it go to awful annihilation. But though my brain says yes, though my brain says all great souls have believed it—while all this is true enough, and it is all plausible enough, oh, for the consciousness of it; oh, if I could only feel that immortality was something besides the tearing asunder of the bonds of affection; if I could only feel that little child in my arms once more; if I could only cradle it into sleep as I have done so many times! And

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yet I cannot feel that that little child knows of me; I cannot feel that that little child is near us." Well now, men and women, I do not care whether you think it absurd or not; I do not care whether you can follow me perfectly or not. I believe what Christianity has taught; I believe what Tennyson taught us, the great soul, the intellectual giant, the great poet of this age. He used to say that sometimes when he was sitting alone and thinking, he was taken out of himself; and it seemed to him as though he were lifted up into the other world, and the great spirits of men made perfect came to him, and he heard the tide of life and immortality rising and falling and filling his soul. I have felt that, my friends. I say it humbly and simply. Others greater than I have felt it.

We believe that immortality as it is taught us by Jesus is communion. When those disciples, after the resurrection, were going down on the road to Emmaus—you remember they were talking about the one they loved so much, that they would never see him any more. They talked just as the world talked about him, when suddenly another form was with them, and they

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looked and beheld their Lord, and they talked with him and he talked with them, all the way along that country road. How that road ever afterwards must have seemed to them an holy place, and every field along it an altar better than the altar in the great temple at Jerusalem! How that roadway must have seemed to them redolent, not only with the rose of Sharon, not only with the grass where the shepherds fed their flocks, but fragrant with the personality of the Master. It was communion after death, after the whole mystery of life had been completed.

And so, my beloved, that is what Easter means to us. Some of you are like the dancing sunbeams to-day, and I am glad it is so. I hope the clouds will not come to you early in life. Dance your way into our hearts and into the hearts of the world; sing the merry roundelays of youth. It is a part of your education; it is a gift of God. But I know by my pastoral experience there are many here who have heavy hearts, who have gone down into the shadow of Gethsemane. And to these I would say: The Master's resurrection teaches that you need



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not wait until you go into the other life, until you are dead. Only be alive and you will find them; only live as the Master lived and you can commune with God the Father, and be one with Him in joy or in sorrow; only live a little of the life that he lived and you will be surrounded by a mighty cloud of witnesses, by ministering angels who are sent unto us, even as St. Paul was. Is there any doubt in that fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians; is there any question that we are all to wear the heavenly body as well as the earthly body; is there any doubt in that great Apostle's mind when he writes the words which I have already quoted? And if St. Paul were standing here to-day—I would he were, or one like him, that he might lift for you the roof of this building that you might see God and the angels around Him,—if there were such an one here to-day, that he might make you to understand that this place, though it be crowded full of great and tender, sweet-faced men and women, that this place is thronged with a multitude that no man has ever seen; and the spiritual life lived by them, above all the descriptions



and poems and songs of men, is the life they bring to you and to me.

As we go from this place this morning, let us remember the white-lilied cross, the symbol of divine life; let us remember that every cross at last, though it be made of hard wood and be filled with cruel nails, will turn to a lilied cross, that out of sorrow shall come joy, and out of weariness shall come rest, and out of loneliness shall come companionship; and let us so live in this present world that we may touch hands with those who are dead and are not dead, those who have lived and are still living, those who love us, those who care for us, those who will watch over us in every exigency of life, enlarging our strength, widening our joy as well as deepening and purifying our love. The Romans represented death as a black-robed angel with ravenous teeth. Christianity and Easter represent death as an angel garbed in white, with its face lit up with love, and when it speaks to us and we listen and obey, the everlasting arms of love are extended to us from the shadows, and we creep into them and are at rest.

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Almighty and All-Merciful God, our Heavenly Father, direct us by Thy holy spirit that we may understand that heaven is spiritual, that in all the struggle of this life we are working out for ourselves a far higher life of glory, and may we draw so near to that spiritual life that those who have gone before may come to us, and though we hear not their voices, nor see their garments, may we behold them through our spiritual vision and listen to them in the silent chambers of our hearts as they tell us, for them and for ourselves, Christ is risen and all is well. Amen.

## XIV

### AN EASTER PRAYER

O GOD of the sunshine and of the flowers,  
Thou who art forever the same, though men  
may come and go, pour out Thy spirit upon us  
on this glad Easter morning, that our hearts  
may be filled with a joy that is not of the earth,  
that our eyes may catch glimpses of the im-  
mortal shores, that our wills may be strength-  
ened for the work and for the mystery of life.

We confess before Thee, O God, our sins of  
omission and commission, all the indifference  
of our hearts, all the coldness with which we  
have met Thy manifestations of law and of  
love; but on this feast day, when Thy face  
looketh down upon us from the altar on high  
and from the splendid though invisible altar of  
nature, we would look up to Thee with child-  
like confidence, penitent for all our sins, ready  
to register our vows once more that from this  
day henceforth we will live a more true, a more

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spiritual, a more Christlike life. We would thank Thee, our God, for all the blessedness of these spring days, when the touch of the winter and the touch of the summer contend with one another for victory, when from beneath the brown earth the green grass appeareth and the flowers in their beauty and in their fragrance robe themselves to make once more their appearance among the sons of men. We thank Thee for all the greatness and the worth of life, for all the garments of joy and of peace and of plenty that cover our souls, for friendship and love in these present days, and for all the inspiration of the Christian religion. Especially we give Thee thanks, O God, for Jesus of Nazareth, our elder brother, the perfect man among the men of the earth, who conquered death and rose in the glory of the first Easter morning. We would draw near to him on this day, remembering that after Calvary came the broken tomb, that after the weariness and the pain of the crucifixion came the joy and the communion of immortal relationship with his beloved disciples for all time. We thank Thee, O God, that we, so far separated from him, re-

joice with the multitudes of Thy children everywhere in the services of this day. Our thoughts are with the past, as we celebrate our Lord's Supper for the first time on Easter in this holy place. All the noble, sweet, and loving faces of the past come before us as we worship; all the memories of lives that have been unselfishly given to the building up of Thy kingdom are with us now; and O God, may we always treasure the past, may we always hold it dear, may we always find it the vantage ground from which we may pass on to larger theology, if possible, to larger knowledge and faith in the days that are to come.

And we beseech Thee, that Thou wilt be with all these Thy children as they gather around Thine altar to-day. May the truth of immortal life sing its way into their hearts; may the lofty and divine harmonies of Thy great instrument join them unto the bosoms of those who are invisibly present with Thee, and may the rich notes of grand old composers who have gone on into the greater life to join the music which is eternal be an inspiration to us as we listen to the strains that are uttered. Grant unto us, a

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deeper faith in Thee, a broader and tenderer love for one another. May this Easter day be not alone proof of everlasting life, but be the motive to spiritual ascension, to the resurrection from sin and wickedness of every kind, resurrection from pain and disappointment and despair of every kind. O God, there are weary souls before me, and there are hearts that have been filled with grief, and there are shadows that gather about some! In this hour, may these shadows flutter away: may every weariness lift itself from souls that are tired and lonely: and may we, one and all, rich and poor, high and low, those who have suffered and those who have not suffered, be one to-day, moulded together by the heat of divine passion; and may there unroll before all of our waiting eyes the vision of the New Jerusalem, where there shall be no more sorrow and no more death, where at last Thou wilt wipe away all tears from all eyes in the perfect revelation and the perfect peace of heaven. In Christ's name, who lived, suffered, and died and was raised from the dead for us, we pray Thee. Amen.

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## XV

### PRAYER

O THOU Light and Love of the universe, filling all things with the blessing of Thy constant presence, our Friend and our Father, visit our waiting hearts as we bow before Thee that all our ways may be illumined by Thy spirit, that all our thoughts, all our ideals, and all our labors may be baptized in truth. We confess before Thee, O God, our many transgressions. We have done many things we ought not to have done, and we have left undone many things we ought to have done. Thy wise and tender appeals are heard in all the ways of life, and while we have sometimes listened and obeyed, we have at other times turned our ears away from Thy commands and left the ways of perfect righteousness and of holy service. Give us the sense of penitence in the presence of all the sins and errors of life, and so mould us by Thy power that hour by



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hour we may come closer unto Jesus Christ our Lord, whose example is above every other example. We offer Thee our Thanksgivings for all Thy mercies that come to us each morning and each evening of our lives, that fall upon us in the wondrous snow, as pure as woman's purity, that swathe in bands of light and beauty the trees and shrubs around us, that fall upon us in the glistening diamonds of light—Thy mercies that come in the hoar frost and the snow. Wherever Thou dost tread, there beauty and power spring up; wherever Thy voice is heard, there come the enthusiasms of life, the ambition to know the earth better, to compel its forces to serve us; ambition to know the mind better, to make the mind the garden where fruitage and harvest of golden knowledge and golden power may be gathered. And so, our Father, in those deeper and holier places where the spirit holds communion with Thyself, above all mere outward effort, above all mere external thinking, where the inflowing of Thy spirit purifies and sanctifies human hearts, we would thank Thee. And by ourselves, within the temple that is within the temple, may we

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hear the voice of the conscience that is universal, urging us to overcome our besetting sins and grow in knowledge and in faith; may we hear the whisperings of the invisible hosts who have come out of the darkness into the light, away from the storm into the eternal calm; and as we hear them, begin ourselves to learn the language of heaven, that we may converse with Thee, even now and in the time to come, in perfect knowledge and perfect understanding.

Grant, we pray Thee, as we remember Thy many gifts to us, that we may understand the obligation which rests upon us by reason of our sonship. May we know that if Thou art good unto the world, we as Thy sons and daughters should render service unto men; if Thou dost provide for us by all the arrangements of Thy providence homes and churches where we are protected from the cold, wilt Thou help us to understand that it is our duty to help those who are without homes, without shelter, and without food in these wintry days, and to act the part of Thy providence unto them according to our knowledge

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and our means, adding to the joy and the warmth of living, and according to our ability bringing the kingdom of heaven into sorrow-stricken hearts and into the lives of those who are weary and lonely. Grant unto us, we pray Thee, a profounder faith, a faith that reaches up to the overhanging branches of the perfect life and finds Thee in the shade and in the fruitage, a faith that can look into the storm and know that Thou dost use the winds and the storm as Thy wings to fly over all the earth, a faith that finds Thee even in pain and sorrow and death, that knows that Thou art forever revealing Thyself by a divine power that no man can measure or define; and as our faith, O God, thus deepens, broadens, and heightens, may there come to us a love that is full of holy desire, that is full of divine expectation, that is full of transfiguring, transforming force; that love joined with faith may give unto us the service of sympathy, the service of tenderness. And grant unto us, our Father, in all the walks of life, that strength which we need. Give us power to win the victory over ourselves in the name of our higher

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selves; give us power to overcome every temptation. Give unto those who are in the midst of sorrow the guidance of Thy holy spirit; put Thine everlasting arms around those who are very dear to us, wherever they may be, and protect them from all dangers by land or by sea, and protect them from all the ills of life as seemeth best unto Thee. And so, O God, at last may the time come when all men, from the least unto the greatest, shall know Thee and find their strength in Thee, and love one another in the perfect service of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray Thee. Amen.

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## XVI

### PRAYER

ALL-WISE and All-Gracious God, filling the heavens and the earth with Thy majesty and mercy! As the angels' voices above join with the voices of men upon the earth, we would lift unto Thee our hymns and our praises, ascribing as Thy due unto Thee all honor and glory, asking that as we humbly bow before Thee Thy light and Thy love may enter our human hearts to transfigure and interpret life. Confessing before Thee our manifold transgressions, our sins of indifference and coldness, our sins of word and of work, we yet look up towards Thee with hope and with renewed consecration, knowing that by every act of penitence and with every open door of consecration we come nearer unto Thee and nearer unto ideal manhood and womanhood.

We thank Thee for all Thy generous providence, for the wonders of the earth and the

sea, for the beauties of nature in the changing seasons as they come and go, for every provision Thou hast made for our temporal welfare; but especially we thank Thee for the greatness of the vision Thou hast given to us, that by understanding and by affection we can enjoy glimpses of the inner glory of the universe, that we can read the revelation within the revelation, that we can find Thy spirit behind all the facts of the material world, and so seeing Thee, who art invisible, by our spiritual selves are enriched, ennobled, and saved.

We give Thee our humble gratitude for all the great lessons that have been taught the world by wise prophets and teachers, but especially we thank Thee for the depth and the height of that wonderful manifestation of law and love given unto men by Jesus of Nazareth; and while we come from many different homes, while we bring here many different creeds and faiths upon which we mould our lives, may we all of us stand in rapture and in admiration before Thy Son, who is perfect manhood, who has shown us how we may overcome our

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temptations and grow in knowledge and in faith and live even now the immortal life.

Grant us, we beseech Thee, a more penetrating faith, a faith that may see beyond all the clouds of disaster, beyond all storms and winds that stir the waters of our natures. Give us a love that is ever pure and unselfish, a service that shall be ever more rational and more helpful, a service that shall quicken the sources of divine life among our fellows, a service that shall make the way of weary feet easier to be trodden, a service that shall constantly dignify the common and dusty walks of the world, and that shall reveal Thee everywhere in all the outward events of life.

Our prayers are offered this morning for all those who travel by land and by sea, for all those we love, wherever they are. Lift them into communion with Thyself that they may realize the power and the security that come alone unto those who live on divine lines. Be, we pray Thee, in the tenderness of Thy wonderful nature, with those who lie upon beds of sickness and who month after month until the years are numbered have been compelled to

meet pain and gathering weakness and disappointment. O God, Thou canst even transfigure these ills and pains of life! Help us to help one another; help us to look up and not down, towards the sunlight as well as towards the shadow, that we may know that somehow the noblest and the sweetest lives are wrought out in the silence of the chamber of sickness and death. And so, O God, wilt Thou give inspiration and strength unto the old and the young, unto those who are strong and those who are weak. Sanctify every new joy and every new love that have come into our lives, and make them all angels of light and truth to lead us always nearer to one another and nearer to the great centre of all things, even Thyself. In Christ's name. Amen.

THE END













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